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Welcome

Welcome to the May issue of *About This Particular Macintosh*! We're excited about this month's Worldwide Developers Conference and the forthcoming release of Mac OS X. We believe OS X will change Mac computing in the way that Windows 95 changed the Windows world. We're eager to watch Apple's changes to their venerable operating system unfold. Read more about the new state of Mac computing in our latest issue of **A**udacious **T**idbits and **P**uckish **M**usings.

Wither Microsoft?

The judge's finding of fact in the government's antitrust case against Microsoft is having an effect on the way Microsoft does business and the competitive environment in which the company conducts its business. While it's not illegal for a monopoly to naturally develop, it is illegal for a company to use its monopoly power to thwart competition and stymie innovation. Judge Jackson has ruled that Microsoft used its monopoly power in an illegal way.

In late April the Justice Department and 17 of the 19 states that brought the anti-trust suit against Microsoft proposed to the courts that the company be divided into two separate entities; one would have ownership rights to the Windows operating systems and the other would receive ownership of the application software division and almost all of Microsoft's other products. Under the plan company executives could only own stock in one of the companies, and the two entities could not rejoin their efforts for a period of ten years.

Ultimately it may not be direct action by the government to breakup or "hog tie" the company that will have the biggest effect on the way Microsoft does business. We believe the free market is a far more potent force. The judge's findings open the door for companies who have been injured by Microsoft's illegal behavior to seek redress and compensation without having to prove that Microsoft has operated a monopoly in an illegal manner. Although we don't like lawsuits as a remedy to problems, holding Microsoft accountable for its actions may change the company's overly aggressive style of doing business.

Emboldened by the government's victory, competitors will find it easier to bring new products to market and compete with Microsoft in the marketplace of new ideas. Windows may remain the predominant desktop operating system for some time. But the government's anti-trust victory will hasten the day that the Windows OS takes its rightful place in the technology era as just one of many products that helped shape the way we live, learn, and work.

We Beat the Street

Last month Apple Computer released its earnings report for the 1st calendar quarter of 2000 (the company's second fiscal quarter). Wall Street's consensus estimate was that the company would have net earnings of $0.81 per share. Once again Apple has pleasantly surprised Wall Street's analysts. Apple's results are as follows:

• For the quarter, Apple reported a net profit of $233 million, or $1.28 per diluted share.

• Excluding a one-time after-tax gain of $73 from the sale of 1.5 million shares of ARM Holdings plc., Apple's net profit was $160 million ($0.88 per share), an increase of 72% from the year ago quarter.

• During the quarter (which ended April 1, 2000) Apple sold 1,043,000 Macs, a gain of 26% over the prior year period.

• Gross margins were 28.2%, topping the 26.3% a year ago. This was due large part to healthy sales of PowerBooks and G4s.

• About 20% of Apple's revenue came from Web-based, Apple Store sales.

• Apple ended the quarter with $3.6 billion in cash and cash equivalents.

• The company announced a 2-for-1 stock split, the first split since 1987.

How 'bout an Upgrade?

We'd love an upgrade card for our older Macs, but we're talking about an upgrade of a different kind. What has kept Apple's share price from reaching its full potential isn't lack of faith in Apple's near term performance, but rather, lack of confidence about the company's long-

term plans. The iMac by all accounts has been a phenomenal success. But industry pundits wonder what will sustain the company's sales and earnings in the future. Flush with cash and rising market share, Apple should perform over the long-term at least as well as its PC hardware competitors. Last quarter's stellar sales of PowerBooks and pro-level G4 mini-towers should put to rest concerns Apple is a one product company. The rollout of Mac OS X and the company's plans to win back professional customers provide an excellent road map for future success. We're not asking Wall Street for special treatment—just an acknowledgment by analysts, rating agencies, and institutional investors that Apple Computer is here to stay. It's time for more brokerage firms and rating agencies to re-evaluate their lackluster forecasts for Apple's long-term growth.

The Return of the Clones?

Hardly ever does a movie sequel surpass the original in terms of story line or box-office success. However, we believe if Apple chose to return to licensing its OS a better story could develop. We claim no bragging rights to inside information, but we think a return to clones merits conversation.

Demand is high for Apple's products and the company has been bashful about adding manufacturing capacity. Mac OS X has all the core features IT professionals have grown to love and will also provide end users with an extraordinary desktop environment. Properly presented to business customers, Mac OS X could eclipse some of the Linux momentum and bring it to the Mac. Linux has many good attributes, but its desktop appearance and software catalog aren't among them. It may be time for Apple to look at a strategic partnership with another hardware manufacturer to help evangelize Mac OS X to large businesses and institutions. Apple has done extraordinarily well in the consumer market, but a hardware partner with expertise in providing business solutions would be an attractive option.

Something for Nothing?

At press time Apple Computer released iMovie as a free download for owners of G4 mini-towers and FireWire-equipped PowerBooks. However, reports on Mac affinity sites and the tests performed by our editorial staff indicate that iMovie can be installed on non-FireWire equipped Macs. iMovie can be downloaded from the Apple Web site or purchased for less than $20 from Apple on CD.

Apple's decision to release iMovie as a free download indicates to us that Apple is changing its priority from reestablishing the Mac in the consumer market via the iMac to pursuing higher margin sales of G4s and PowerBooks. Thousands of Mac buyers have forsaken the purchase of higher priced mini-towers in favor of iMacs in order to obtain a copy of iMovie, Apple's consumer level digital video software.

By making iMovie available to all owners of FireWire equipped Macs, Apple is extending its efforts to make the Macintosh the #1 platform for digital video hobbyists and amateur enthusiasts. It's a smart move by Apple and foreshadows an overall change in Apple's approach to the marketplace, now that the company's survival is no longer in question.

Max for Mac is Back

For Mac music enthusiasts the folks at Cycling '74 have very good news. Cycling '74, Opcode Systems, and IRCAM recently signed an agreement that makes Cycling '74 the new publisher of Max, the graphical interactive programming environment for music and multimedia. The software is currently available for download only. A packaged version is planned within four to six weeks. We won't delve into the melodrama behind the news, but readers who love both programming and making music on their Macs should stop by Cycling '74's Web site[1] or read David Ozab's column inside this month's issue.

Please enjoy our latest issue!

The ATPM Staff

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1. http://www.cycling74.com

PixelToy Review

The [review of PixelToy](#)[1] says that it has no productive use. Actually I know of a semi-practical use for it.

First you play with PixelToy until you have a pattern that you like. Save the image and close PixelToy. Open your favorite photo paint program that can create masks. Photoshop would be best, but I use a program that cost only a tenth of that. Use the program to create a black-and-white image. I recommend typing your name, real big.

Open the PixelToy image in a second window of the photo paint program. Use the black-and-white image to mask a portion of the PixelToy image. Copy the masked image to the clipboard and paste to a third document. Voila! Your name in pretty colors.

I'm using this technique to design my business cards, social calling cards, and greeting cards. Unfortunately PixelToy doesn't have good enough resolution for high-end graphics, but it works fine for low-end graphics and can sometimes be used for middle-range graphics.

Tim Goetsch

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.03/pixeltoy.shtml

DSL and the Mac

I have been a Mac user since 1985.

When I encounter [problems similar to yours](#)[2], I recall the prejudice that I have endured over the years as a Irish Catholic growing up in Ontario, Canada.

For example, when I was five years old, I was playing with some friends, and a mother came out. She invited the group to have cookies and milk, but told me "Go home Maloney. You're a Catholic."

There are many laws dealing with minorities in the US of A. We Mac users are a minority group subject to much prejudice and discrimination. Can we get the ACLU to support us?

Al Maloney

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April Fools

As many readers will have noticed, our recent [April issue](#)[3] contained a number of April Fools columns. If you have trouble separating them from the real thing, look at the little apple on the bottom of the article. A regular ATPM apple means you are reading a regular article. An apple core means, well, you can guess what it means…

We hope you enjoyed it!

The ATPM Staff

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2. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/dslsegments.shtml
3. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/

We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise at editor@atpm.com. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's OK too.

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The Golden Touch

As a parent of young children, I'm beginning to believe that timeless children's stories were originally written with adults in mind. It's too bad most of us fail to revisit the wisdom in these classics until our children or grandchildren clamor for a night time story. Tragically, King Midas is as alive today as when the author of that fabled story first brought him to life centuries ago. Greed takes many forms but the results are almost always the same.

I remember the month Windows 95 was introduced to consumers. It was the same month I purchased my Power Mac 7500/100. It's the computer that's now on loan to my son's first grade classroom. Almost five years from its original purchase, the hearty little machine is still delighting its users. What's interesting to note is although Windows 95 has done well with consumers, most Windows 95 equipped computers purchased at the same time I bought my 7500/100 are no longer in service.

Critics of Apple Computer often tout the Mac's single digit market share as the number one reason not to buy the company's products. But market share is not always the best way to determine a product's popularity, especially when one company's product has traditionally lasted far longer than the product made by its competitors. If one has to replace product "b" twice as often as one has to replace product "a," it doesn't mean the consumers like product "b" more, or that it's twice as popular as product "a." When it comes to market share, the Mac's popularity with users hasn't been fully reflected in the numbers. Historically Macs have remained in service much longer than PCs manufactured by other companies. I'm not about to claim that more people use Macs than use Windows based PCs, but there are far more Macs in service than you might think if market share reports were your only guide.

What happened to Apple in the wake of the release of Windows 95 has been well documented by computer industry historians. What's interesting to note is that at the time of the

release of Windows 95 and in the quarter that followed, Apple continued to ship record numbers of Macs. Apple's subsequent problems stemmed less from the common notion that Windows 95 is more "popular" than the Mac OS, than from a fundamental flaw in Apple's former business strategy. The strategy was based on greed rather than an effort to meet the needs of or satisfy the desires of users.

I remember being in the book store at USC that fateful August in 1995 when Apple released a new line of PowerPCs and Microsoft released Windows 95. College students and other consumers were buying all the Power Macs Apple could produce. Unfortunately, the company had chosen to dedicate much of its manufacturing capacity to producing non-PowerPC Macs at a time when users were clamoring for the latest in desktop technology. Apple could make more money per unit on the older technology than they could on the newer, PowerPC products. In the end Apple had too many computers that consumers didn't want and not enough of the products that consumers were eager to buy. The company lost sales, had an expensive inventory of unsold products, and eventually lost its footing.

Apple's inability to meet consumer demand for Power Macs gave consumers little choice but to look at PC alternatives equipped with Windows 95. Consumers *en masse* chose Windows 95-equipped computers over the non-PowerPC Macs that were available for sale. Many users would have preferred Macs but the latest in Apple technology could not be found in stores and the company lost hundreds of millions of dollars due to unfilled orders. Drastic price reductions on the non-PowerPC Macs that Apple couldn't sell hurt the company's image as a purveyor of premium quality products. The image problems remained until the release of the iMac three years later.

What exacerbated Apple's market share tumble from the beginning of 1996 until the Summer of 1998 was the fact that many loyal Mac owners waited until the release of the iMac before replacing their older machines. Again, the popularity of Macs continues to be under-represented in market share statistics. For example, there are thousands and thousands of pre-PowerPC Macs still in service in elementary schools across America.

There's no doubt that some of the original iMac's success was due to pent-up demand from loyal Mac owners who were replacing older systems. But the iMac's biggest triumph is that it restored consumer confidence in Apple and appealed to a large group of people who never before owned a personal computer. The fact that it won converts to the Mac platform only adds to its legacy as a breakthrough product.

It took Apple Computer three years to undo the almost catastrophic damage done to the company's image by the efforts of former Apple executives to sell older technology at high prices to consumers. In my view it was a thinly veiled effort at corporate greed that resulted in consumers losing confidence in the value of Apple's brand name. History shows that Apple paid an almost tragic price for this mistake.

The success of Windows 95 helped to make Bill Gates a household name and until about now the wealthiest man on the planet. Although Microsoft had a lucrative business before the release of Windows 95, the success of their desktop OS added luster to the company's image. A luster that, until the recent antitrust case brought Microsoft's way of doing business into the limelight, had remained mostly untarnished in the minds of consumers.

A federal judge has recently ruled that Microsoft has operated a monopoly in an illegal way, stifling competition and thwarting innovation. In my view Microsoft is living on borrowed time. I believe Windows 2000 will be the last major operating system product released from Redmond, Washington. Whether or not Microsoft is broken up by court decree or disassembled by market forces, the Windows era is over. Microsoft has tried to force too many people to buy too many of its products by leveraging its monopoly position to eliminate potential rivals, thereby forcing consumers to accept its products, whether or not they were the best products that could be brought to market.

For now Microsoft remains a formidable competitor. The company has about $30 billion in cash and large investments in established and emerging companies. But Microsoft's position as an industrial tyrant, devouring or killing any potential competitor that stands in its way is over. The coming fall of Microsoft is analogous to the way Apple tried to control all aspects of the Macintosh market, only to disenfranchise potential partners and remove almost all incentives to produce products for its computers. Apple has wisely chosen to stop manufacturing hardware peripherals and other ancillary products that added little to the company's bottom-line but forced others to abandon the Macintosh market. Few companies could compete against Apple for a fair slice of the Mac platform pie. Ironically, Microsoft is now trapped by a similarly outdated and anti-competitive strategy that was once the linchpin of its success.

One reason Microsoft is fighting so hard against the Justice Department and the States is because its corporate structure and culture rely on control in order to sell products. Microsoft's products don't necessarily need to be the best; they just need to meet the mini-

mum requirements of users. Microsoft has relied on its unbridled domination of the operating system market to eliminate competition using both legal and illegal means.

Like the fabled story of King Midas, Bill Gates' desire to build wealth and market control has come at great cost to Microsoft and the world in which it operates. It's true that Microsoft continues as a profitable company, but more and more organizations are planning to move away from Microsoft in the same way that associates of King Midas learned to stay clear of his "golden touch."

I give Gil Amelio more credit than most (but probably less than he claims) for the turnaround at Apple Computer. Until he ascended to the top spot at Apple the company was lost in time with a mindset that although Macs cost more than PCs made by the company's competitors, they were still attractive to buyers because they lasted much longer. That might be true for some buyers, but most people in the market for a PC don't look beyond two or three years time. Gil Amelio opened to doors to the adoption of more common and less expensive PC parts—a move than Steve Jobs accelerated upon his return to the company.

Adopting more common PC parts may shorten the useful life of today's Macs when compared to the products the company made a few years ago. I doubt that an iMac purchased today will be in service five years from now. In contrast, my PowerPC 7500/100 will finally be retired soon after the release of OS X, not because it's no longer working but because the requirements of OS X Consumer will demand the processing power of a less vintage machine. In order to gain market share Apple has had to reduce its prices and decrease costs. But consumers are no longer willing to pay a premium for a computer's longer life anymore than they are willing to pay more for a car because they think it will last them for 20 years or a television that will last them for more than ten years.

Today's buyers want the latest in technology at the lowest possible price. The iMac's low price will continue to induce more Mac users to upgrade their computers and continue to appeal to new computer owners and people looking for an alternative to Windows. Shortly, market share data will begin to more closely reflect the true popularity of Macs among computer users. I expect Apple's market share to continue to rise as more consumers become convinced that Apple Computer is here to stay. This year's educational buying season should be a boon for Apple as schools work to replace Macs purchased five, six or even seven years ago.

It's taken Apple Computer almost four years to undo the damage done—not so much the damage done by the release of Windows 95, but by an ill-fated effort by company executives to make money at the expense of consumers by flooding the market with older products when buyers wanted the latest technology the company had to offer. Apple accepted this lesson about greed only when the company was brought to the brink of oblivion. The executives at Microsoft should have taken note.

The fall of Microsoft will be fast and furious. It's an empire, in my view, that has been built like the proverbial house of cards. The winds of change have begun to blow and very little of Microsoft's empire will remain standing. The federal court's decision in the Microsoft antitrust case is only the beginning. Like King Midas, Microsoft's stock rooms are filled with gold, but few friends can be found.

It's ironic that the extended life that was built into every Mac may have hurt the company's market share numbers more than it helped. But perhaps it's justice that the accelerated obsolescence built into Wintel boxes will hasten Microsoft's demise as the leader in PC software. Most Wintel PCs purchased today have a useful life of about eighteen months to two years. In less than that time institutional customers (the ones Microsoft covets the most) will be stampeding to find non-Microsoft alternatives. Properly positioned, Mac OS X with its Unix derivative core and its open source foundation may provide institutional customers with the solutions they need. Keep your eyes on Oracle and Sun Microsystems. At the same time keep your eyes on Apple. Watch for major announcements at the World Wide Developers' Conference to be held later this month, and in the lead up to the release of Mac OS X Consumer and Macworld Expo New York.

I admire the decision makers at Apple Computer who had the courage and the foresight to make the difficult choices that were needed to turn the company around and restore its image. I also respect many of the engineers and developers at Microsoft. The Redmond campus is home to many of our nation's brightest software artists. It's not their fault that the company's leaders have encouraged a culture and developed a way of doing business that a federal court has determined to be illegal. In doing so the executives have set the company upon a dangerous path toward self-destruction.

While we await for events to unfold, I recommend that readers spend some time revisiting some of the great children's classics such as the story of King Midas. They're fun for bedtime reading. I also recommend them to many computer industry executives who arrive at work dressed as adults but prefer to spend their days acting more like spoiled children. Why is it that children immediately understand the moral of these stories but adults seem to relish giving the characters in these tragic fables new life?

About This
Opinion

Apple Cider
Random Squeezings from a Mac User

BY TOM IOVINO

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My, How Time Flies

Earlier last month, my wife and I were returning from the local city park. Our son was fast asleep in his car seat, spent after a busy day of celebrating his second birthday.

Could he already be two years old?

We were exhausted too. After all, planning the big event, trying to keep his little playmates from getting into too much trouble, and the drop-off from the sugar high we were experiencing were killing us. But none of these were as exhausting as hauling his treasure trove of presents from the park shelter to the trunk of our car.

Swept up by the moment, my wife and I began to talk about how quickly our son had grown. I can vividly remember our little boy only being able to sleep, cry, and eat. Now, he can walk—nay—run everywhere he needs to go. He can count to ten and tell us exactly how and where he would like his Cheerios[1] to be served to him.

All this development, of course, means that now he is going to need new toys more appropriate for his age. Sure, when he was a newborn, a mobile and rattle filled the bill, but now he needs toys that can challenge his intellect and creativity. Our friends are buying him toys that help him learn his alphabet and how to count.

In much the same way, the computer industry has developed at a blistering pace. A quick look back to the last time the United States elected a President[2] (1996) shows that the most tricked-out Mac you could buy was the Power Macintosh 9500, sporting the 200 MHz Motorola PowerPC 604e chip.

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1. http://www.cheerios.com
2. http://www.rockthevote.org/

Needless to say, since then we've seen the G3 and now the G4 chips, and we're running into the 500 MHz range. And we still have about six months to go until the election!

Now that we've established the fact that hardware muscle has increased dramatically, you can only guess that software engineers have written programs to put this equipment through its paces. It has become more important than ever for computer users to step up to the plate and pony up the money to upgrade their computers to get the latest and the greatest that the industry has to offer.

But this leaves one burning question…

What do you do with your old computer?

For those of us with kids, that question is usually a no-brainer: the kids will get it. Hey, the tykes don't need the latest and the greatest to run Reader Rabbit[3] or to write their homework on.

But what about those of us who don't have kids, or those who are replacing even older computers for our young-uns?

In my lifetime, I've replaced two computers. The most recent one I disposed of—my trusty old LC 580[4]—I sold to a friend who gave it to his kids. Okay, that kept me from worrying about what to do with it.

But my first computer, a IIsi[5] with a faulty video processor chip, I tossed into the dumpster outside my apartment. Yeah, I thought about it for a few minutes after I pitched it, but what else was I going to do with it?

Apparently, I was not the only person who had this problem. One by-product of Moore's Law[6] is that these now obsolete machines are becoming a problem for solid waste processors.

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3. http://www.readerrabbit.com/products/lrn2read.htm
4. http://www.info.apple.com/info.apple.com/applespec/applespec.taf?RID=129
5. http://www.info.apple.com/info.apple.com/applespec/applespec.taf?RID=15
6. http://Webopedia.Internet.com/Hardware/ICs/Moores_Law.html

Hey, back in the days when a Pentium 90 or a PowerPC 601 processor running at a blazing 80 MHz was king of the hill, sure, people wanted to get their hands on the latest and greatest. But, now with Pentium 90 machines serving as bulky paperweights and Power Macintosh 6100s struggling to keep pace with the intricacies of OS 9, those once-coveted machines are discarded.

Some organizations (specifically, government agencies that can't merely dispose of assets) simply warehouse such obsolete machines. This is a temporary solution at best, because the county government for which I work is shooting to replace every computer used by its employees once every three years to keep technology current. It's only a matter of time before the county runs out of space to store these old machines and the cost to maintain the warehouse becomes outrageous.

Another traditional solution to this problem has been to donate the old computers to charities, schools, or other organizations that can't afford to purchase the latest technology. The only problem with this is that, once again, you're only temporarily delaying the inevitable. These charities and schools will need to run more and more modern software, which means the life of these computers at these organizations will be short at best.

The third method, which I employed with the IIsi, is just to pitch the old computers into the nearest trash can and be done with them. Sure, your office won't have to deal with storing them any more, but this method has many effects on our environment.

You see, in every computer, there are a number of components. Each of these components is made of various metals, chemicals, and plastics. Some of these components aren't too offensive, but some, such as lead and lithium in batteries and mercury in switches, can be downright poisonous, contaminating groundwater supplies for many years to come. Other items, such as plastic casings, don't readily decompose, which means they'll be filling our landfills for centuries—even millennia—to come. Also, a number of important metals such as copper, steel, aluminum, and even gold are used in the construction of computers. While maybe not a great deal of these metals are in any one computer, if you take all of the surplus computers from a particular company, it could add up to a significant of materials—just wasting away in a landfill, no good to anyone.

So, where does the answer lie? In recent years, <u>a number of green companies</u>[7] have sprung up—each working to reduce the amount of dangerous and non-biodegradable waste that goes to our landfills. These companies tear the computer down into its basic elements. They pull the copper wire, aluminum and steel frames, and even the gold connectors, and recycle those parts. The dangerous stuff, such as the mercury and lead, is put into barrels and disposed of at a proper waste facility. The plastic is shredded and turned into other plastic items such as toys or household products.

Their efforts are going a long way toward reducing the waste and danger to the public, but there's one major problem. Field stripping a computer is pretty labor-intensive work, so these companies can only handle a few computers at a time. The rest of the computers that are turned away—well, you can guess that once that happens, most people trying to unload their computers pretty much pitch them right into the landfill.

Well, after my wife and I returned home and put our son to bed, we went about sorting out the toys he had outgrown. For us, the answer for what to do with these items was pretty easy—we just packed them up and sent them to the attic. After all, we're planning to have another child, and our son's younger brother or sister can certainly use them.

However, for those of us who use technology, the answer is much more weighty. Do we allow the items that have improved our quality of life to threaten the very health and well being of our environment?

If only the answer were as easy as child's play.

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7. http://www.recycle.net/

One Down, Two to Go

This morning (April 15) I received some wonderful news via email. The message, a press release from David Zicarelli of Cycling '74, began as follows:

> This morning Cycling '74 introduced a revised Web site in conjunction with our conclusion of an agreement with Opcode/Gibson and IRCAM to assume the publication of Max.

As those of you who've been following the soap opera that was once Opcode understand, this is a great success. For the rest of you, here's the tragic tale. Opcode was one of the pioneer music software developers for the Mac. David Zicarelli was one of its engineers from the beginning. He led the team in developing MAX, once Opcode gained the rights from IRCAM (the major government-sponsored computer music research institution in France), during the late 1980s.

Released in 1991, Opcode MAX was by far the most significant computer music environment on the Mac (there wasn't a PC equivalent until a few years ago). Though not Opcode's biggest seller (that would be its MIDI sequencer, Vision, which was the industry standard throughout the 1990s), MAX quickly built a loyal following and gave the Mac a reputation as a serious tool for computer music.

The end of Opcode began in 1995, when Microsoft approached it about porting Vision to Windows 95 (PC MIDI sequencers at this time were laughable). The shift in emphasis alienated many of the engineers, including Zicarelli who had also worked on the early development of Vision. Zicarelli was among the first of the original engineers to leave, starting his own software company (Cycling '74) in 1997. He continued developing MAX there, but Opcode still handled publication. He also developed MSP (Max Signal Processing) a set of audio processing objects designed to work with MAX (Opcode MAX had only dealt with MIDI up to this point, due to the processing limitations of the 68K Mac) and Pluggo, which

converts MSP patches into VST plug-ins (software-based audio effects processors developed for Steinberg's Cuebass VST, but now compatible with both Vision DSP and Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer).

Meanwhile, the situation at Opcode grew worse. The Windows 95 port of Vision was a flop, and other developers (Steinberg, who successfully ported Cuebass; and Twelve Tone, who developed Cakewalk exclusively for Windows) met the growing demand. Opcode never recovered from the disaster. The effective end came in May 1999, when Gibson Musical Instruments bought out Opcode.

Following the buyout, all the engineers that hadn't quit by then were forced out. Development on USB MIDI interfaces (Opcode's latest project) was scrapped after the release of the low-end MIDIPort 32, and packaged software was phased out in favor of download versions. Driver updates were intermittent at best, and numerous Opcode users (still the majority in the music industry from Opcode's heyday) were left with the very real possibility that Vision, MAX, and OMS (the MIDI to Mac communications protocol which had become an industry standard) would die through lack of support, especially once OS X was released.

So Zicarelli has been working since then to gain full control of MAX. On April 14, the final deal was struck, and Cycling '74 took over all aspects of development and publication. The new MAX upgrade to 3.6.3 is the first in about a year (I bought version 3.5.9 last May), and the numerous support problems (refer to my Segments[1] in ATPM 5.10) are now a thing of the past.

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1.   http://www.atpm.com/5.10/segments.shtml

The software is presently available for download only. A packaged version is planned within four to six weeks. In addition, the MAX/MSP bundle is still available, in both packaged and downloaded versions, as are updates to MAX, MSP, and Pluggo. Further information[2] is available on Cycling '74's Web site. The story isn't over though, as the future of both OMS and Vision are still in doubt. I ask you all to please visit SaveOMS.org[3] if you haven't already, and lend your support to the future of music software development on the Mac.

Next Month: MP3.com found liable. What happens now?

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2. http://www.cycling74.com/support/opmax.html
3. http://www.saveoms.org

S.T.F.U.

In case you don't know, "STFU" is a commonly used online acronym for a rude statement that in the interests of propriety I'll not define with any precision here. Suffice it to say that it roughly means "Listen here old boy, I'd much rather you kept your comments to yourself if it's all the same to you. There's a good chap." STFU also happens to be the exact sentiment that I would like to extend to certain whiners who hang out in Scott Kevill's magnificent Mac-only online gaming service, [GameRanger](1)[1] (GR). If you've never been in GameRanger, it may shock you to learn that an all-too-common thread in GR chat is—believe it or not— "Macs suck!" And that just chaps my bondi hide.

PC Envy

I don't want you to get the wrong idea, though; participating in the online community of Mac gamers is fun and rewarding. I highly recommend it. But some Mac gamers are suffering from a bad case of PC envy. I guess that's easy to understand. We Mac gamers don't have nVidia GeForce cards, nor do we have Sierra's Half-Life. But some of these guys take it too far. Why? I think they're forgetting a few important things.

To listen to these guys whine and complain, you'd think that all would be gaming nirvana if we only had PCs. As if every PC comes with a GHz Athlon, a GeForce video card, and costs, oh, about $1.79. Hey, reality-check time—most PCs ain't got much.

Yes, it's true that the highest performing gaming computer is still a PC, but it's also true that most PCs fall quite short of this ideal. The hottest selling PC right now is probably a low-end Compaq, or maybe an eMachines. You won't be getting 100 frames per second (fps) in Quake III Arena with these puppies. Heck, a Compaq Presario in the iMac price range

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1. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/gameranger.shtml

comes with a 533 MHz AMD K6–2 processor and 8 megabytes of video RAM. I'd hardly call this a Mac-crushing set of specifications. It's more like an ugly iMac that runs Windows. If you wanted to get a better performing gaming PC you'd have to spend a bit more money—kind of like spending more money for a Power Mac G4 instead of an iMac. The iMac may not be well suited for hardcore 3D gamers, but neither are most PCs. The main problem here isn't your platform—it's your budget.

Clash of the Paradigms

Another reason for my displeasure is the fact that some of these ninnies do little but bemoan the sorry state of game availability on the Macintosh platform. I think everyone understands that there are more games available for Windows-based PCs than there are for Macs. But why all the constant complaining? And why does it get right under my skin like an iron gauntlet on a chalkboard? I think I know at least part of the answer.

This is a tale of two Mac gamers. One of them is a newcomer—one of those fortunate souls who got into the Mac scene during Apple's recent comeback. He's relatively new to the Macintosh and, more importantly, new to the second-class status of our platform in terms of software availability. Each trip to CompUSA is a slap in the face to him as he sees the seemingly endless rows of Windows software, and in contrast, the meager selection in the Apple Store-Within-A-Store section. His PC buddy calls him up and asks him if he's up for a little Half-Life. That stings. Naturally he's given to complain about this—frequently, and even in ALL CAPS.

The other Mac gamer is an old timer who's been around the block a few times. He stuck with the Macintosh during the lean years and now that Apple has risen from its ashes like a triumphant phoenix, he is elated. He watches with delight as more and more Macs are sold and more and more software titles are developed for his beloved platform. There's a spring in his step and a foolish grin on his face as he makes his way to the CompUSA checkout counter with a copy of Unreal Tournament.

What happens when these two gamers meet online? They don't exactly see eye to eye. Before long, the embittered newbie accuses the exuberant old timer of being "blind to the truth" of the dearth of Mac software titles and of being a lackey for Apple. The old timer suggests that the newbie might do well to STFU. Who is at fault here? Nobody, really. It's a clash of paradigms that can't be reasoned away. It just is.

Armchair iCEOs

I'm as thick-skinned as the next guy, I guess. If some 16-year-old Mac gamer wants to spout off about how Macs suck and about how he himself knows how to remedy this situation, I'm fine with that. It's a free Internet. Live and let live, I say. But like the tiny drip of water that eventually drives you mad, I've finally grown too weary of these armchair iCEOs to remain silent.

I shall now clue them in to a few things. First, Apple would not sell a million more iMacs if only they included an upgradeable AGP slot. Second, it would have been the wrong thing to do for Apple to dump graphics chip maker ATI in favor of 3dfx. (3dfx doesn't make graphics hardware for portables, and as of this writing they don't even have a single shipping Mac product.)

Perhaps these wrong-headed ideas stem from an overestimation of the importance of the game market. It's as if Apple need only please the hard-core 3D gamers to please everyone. Few of them realize that Apple is selling more computers than ever before, or that Apple is making tons of money doing it, or that Apple's market share is rising faster than almost anyone's in the industry. The record shows that Apple's management team knows their business pretty darned well. Sure, I have suggestions for them. Sure, I think Apple should offer 3dfx Voodoo4 cards as a build-to-order option. But the fact is, Apple—rather than "sucking"—is taking names and kicking butt compared to where they were even two years ago.

Cold Hard Facts

Maybe one of the most difficult things for these malcontents to hear is that Apple will probably always be second best when it comes to providing the very top-of-the-line gaming experience. I just don't see that changing in the foreseeable future.

Rumor has it that game makers like id, Lucas Arts, and Blizzard are actual companies whose aim is to make actual money off our desire for digital entertainment. They'll always put the lion's share of development dollars toward the largest potential market (Windows). Companies like nVidia and 3dfx, who make add-in graphics accelerators, are also in it for the money. I figure they'll always focus more on the largest piece of the pie (again Windows). With me so far?

Apple would probably need to grab and hold something approaching 50% of the desktop market for this situation to turn in its favor. As optimistic as I am about the direction our platform is going, I don't think that's a realistic short-term goal. This is why we will periodically get the short end of the gaming stick. The computer game industry treats us as a secondary market—because that's what we are. If your main goal is to have a great computer and a great gaming experience, then by all means buy a Macintosh. But if you can never be satisfied with less than cutting-edge game performance, then the Macintosh is clearly not for you. Ditto if you can't stomach the idea that your PC friends will often have more games to choose from than you do. Those are the cold hard facts.

Room for Improvement

Lest you good ATPM readers think that perhaps the whiners are correct in their charge that I am merely a lackey for Apple, I will now concede that more could be done to improve the state of gaming on the Macintosh. Let me also say that I make recommendations to Apple with an air of humility—Apple seems to be doing pretty well without my input thus far.

That said, I do think Apple would do well to court game developers more aggressively. I also think Apple ought to consider letting gamers choose a more gaming-oriented video card in their Power Mac G4s if they so desire. 3dfx seems to be a worthy candidate. I'm sure gamers and 3dfx would be delighted with such a development. None of these suggestions change the fact, however, that the main thing Apple must do to improve the state of gaming on the Macintosh is to simply sell more Macintoshes. That's the bottom line-increase market share. And Apple seems to be doing this very well indeed.

So to whiners and naysayers within and without the Macintosh gaming community I say, "STFU."

Kill Your Desktop

Last month we <u>examined icons</u>[1] as one of the components of your overall Finder experience. In this issue's *GUI Junkie*, we'll take on the other aspect of the Finder: the desktop itself.

Since nearly the beginning of the Macintosh experience, users have been able to change the appearance of the desktop background. In earlier versions of the Mac OS, this was facilitated through the Desktop portion of the Control Panel. Users were limited to simple variations of black and white, then grayscale—but the patterns sure beat a plain gray desktop.

System 7.5 was a great leap forward for desktop changing, as it offered a separate control panel designed solely for changing the desktop pattern. It was also around this time that two shareware utilities arrived that allowed the user to set not just a desktop pattern, but a desktop **picture** as well. These were <u>Décor</u>[2], by François Pottier, and <u>DeskPicture</u>[3], by Pierce Software. Both utilities are still available today and are the best way for pre-Mac OS 8 users to gain the ability to display a picture on their desktop.
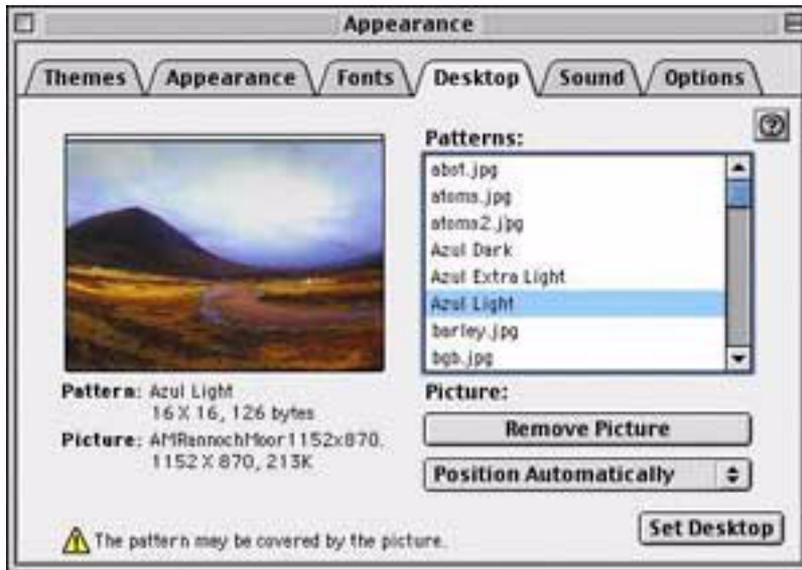
The Modern Mac Desktop

For users of the latest versions of the Mac OS Apple has provided a new way to change the desktop background. Under OS 8 and 8.1, there was a Desktop Pictures control panel. Now,

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/guijunkie.shtml
2. http://pauillac.inria.fr/%7Efpottier/decor.html.en
3. http://www.peircesw.com/DeskPicture.html

the functions of that bit of software have been rolled into the Appearance control panel under the Desktop tab, as shown below.
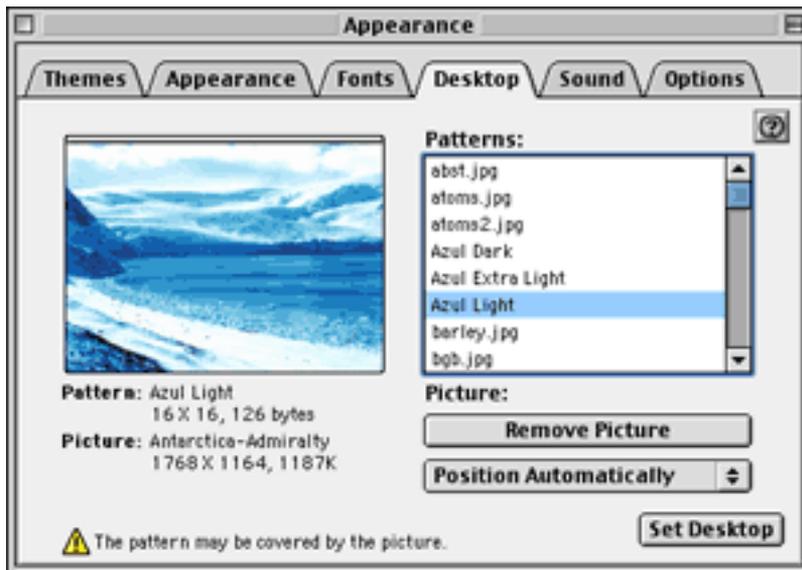

As you can see, I currently have a nice pastoral scene from bonnie Scotland as my desktop. If I wanted to change it, I would simply click on the Remove Picture button. This button would then change to Place Picture, and the picture would disappear from the preview window, as shown below.
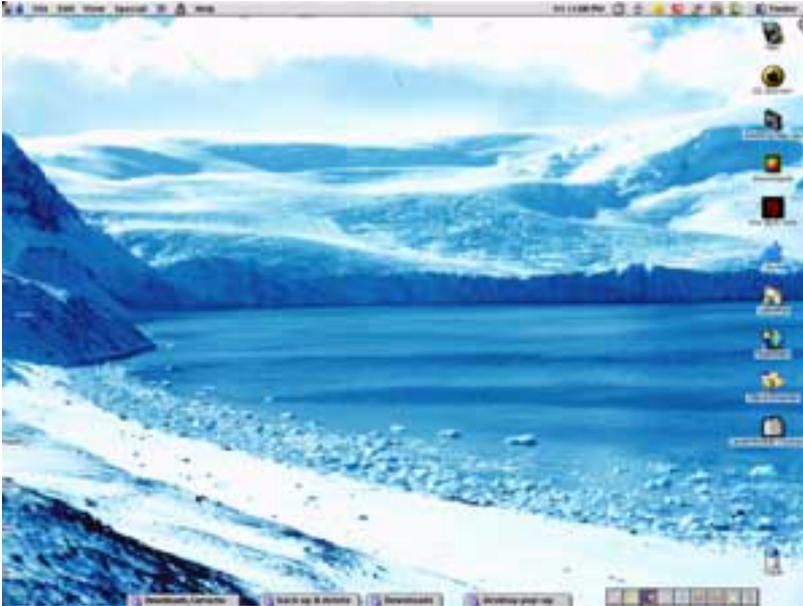
Now you want to select your new desktop by clicking on Place Picture. This should open up the folder called Desktop Pictures, which is most often inside the Appearance folder inside your System Folder. However, you can relocate the Desktop Pictures folder anywhere you like on your hard drive.

I think I'm going to select a picture (courtesy of the National Weather Service) of a joint American civilian/military expedition to Antarctica during the late 1940s. Once you make your selection, your control panel should appear similar to this.

From here, all you have to do is click Set Desktop and close the control panel, and your new desktop is in place!

Not much has changed since my first screenshot of my G3's desktop in the first *GUI Junkie*, though I am utilizing iMacolor, highlighted last month in this column. In case you couldn't tell, blue is a favorite color of mine!

There are all sorts of places to look for new desktop pictures for your Macintosh. ResExcellence[4] has updates every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and provides the latest news on desktop projects. MacDesktops[5] features new desktop pictures every Wednesday. In addition, Customize.org[6], while mainly a site for the PC GUI, has excellent desktop picture material. It appears that Customize.org updates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as well. All these sites are good jumping-off points for exploring the Web for more desktops. Last but not least, there is ATPM's own desktop picture collection[7].

A word of warning, however, when dealing with desktop pictures. If you delete the desktop picture file that is currently selected in the Appearance control panel from your hard drive, you will notice your Mac is extremely sluggish in responding, especially when in the Finder.

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4. http://www.resexcellence.com
5. http://www.macdesktops.com
6. http://www.customize.org
7. http://www.atpm.com/6.05/animals/

You may get errors on start-up as well. This is because the Macintosh is looking for the desktop picture you told it you wanted it to display. The solution is to go back into your Appearance control panel, click on the Remove Picture button, then Set Desktop. This will clear the error.

Have fun personalizing your desktop background, and happy hunting for new desktop pictures!

Contributing Editor Christopher Turner is working on a few desktop pictures of his own, and hopes to have them available for his loyal readers soon.

About This
Opinion

On a Clear Day
You Can See The Hollywood Sign…

BY MIKE SHIELDS

mshields@atpm.com

I'd Like the Filet Mignon

Last month, I talked about iMovie, and how it's not available for anything besides the iMac, yet. I spoke of KFC moments, and what they mean to you, the consumer. What I didn't have, was a recent MacCentral news story and a trip to eBay, wherein I've discovered an underground movement of people selling their copies of iMovie. One is even including the FireWire cable, for those of us that want mashed potatoes and cole slaw with our steak. So, since I have no real topic this month, as what we really wanted to come out of NAB a few weeks ago didn't, I'll expand on the [meat metaphor](http://www.atpm.com/6.04/hollywood.shtml)[1].

For those who tuned in late, let's review. iMovie is only available to you if you buy an iMac DV. Apple doesn't sell it as a stand-alone product, on the theory that they want you to purchase Final Cut Pro instead. A conspiracy theory of JFK proportions.

But I've got a bigger one.

It seems that the fine folks at eBay are not allowing the auctions to complete. Now, I've been in contact with a lawyer on this one, and he says eBay is within their right to halt an auction, for whatever reason. Which is probably true. However, if they are stopping them with a false sense that the sale of iMovie is illegal, then we've got a problem.

I'm reminded of Garth Brooks. It seems about five or six years ago, he decided that he's due royalties on the sale of his used CD's. Which is patently ridiculous. He feels he has the right to collect twice on the sale of one CD. This is absurd on the face of it. If I sell you my used Scirocco, does Volkswagen get the money? Ok, my lawyer friend says a better analogy is if you lease a car for say three years, you can't sell it. However, you can transfer the lease. Now, I have to believe that the license agreement for iMovie isn't that strict, however, I haven't read

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/hollywood.shtml

it. But if it's as boilerplate as the licenses on OS 9, AppleWorks 6, and every other piece of Apple software for which I have read the license, it contains the following clause:

> 2. Permitted Uses and Restrictions. This License allows you to install and use the Apple Software on a single computer at a time. This License does not allow the Apple Software to exist on more than one computer at a time. You may make one copy of the Apple Software in machine-readable form for backup purposes only. The backup copy must include all copyright information contained on the original. Except as expressly permitted in this License, you may not decompile, reverse engineer, disassemble, modify, rent, lease, loan, sublicense, distribute or create derivative works based upon the Apple Software in whole or part or transmit the Apple Software over a network. *You may, however, transfer your rights under this License provided you transfer the related documentation, this License and a copy of the Apple Software to a party who agrees to accept the terms of this License and destroy any other copies of the Apple Software in your possession.…* Your rights under this License will terminate automatically without notice from Apple if you fail to comply with any term(s) of this License.

The emphasis is mine, for sake of clarity. Now, the way I read this is that I can sell a piece of Apple software, as long as I delete the copy from my HD, and all related documentation, and give you the original CD. Such as one auction did, with the following pic.

And I've recently received an email from one auctioneer, telling me that his auction did indeed complete. So, it can happen. He was encouraged by one of the bidders to withdraw the auction, but not by anyone official. The way it was presented on "The List" is that eBay is closing down the auctions, for fear of being sued by Apple. Which according to the above, shouldn't happen.

However, in an effort to be totally objective, I'll present the other side and then leave it up to you, the home viewer. Who's right? Apple, eBay, or the individual that wants to sell his unused copy of iMovie?

Apple's stance has been put forth as follows: You bought it, it's yours. We don't care what you do with it, except, it's yours for the rest of your life. eBay, believing this, will stop an illegal auction. Of course, as noted previously, this hasn't always happened, and I don't believe that a sale of iMovie as put forward above is illegal. The individual consumer, believing he has the right to sell his iMovie CD, attempts to sell in on eBay. If eBay mistakenly believes they can block the auction, do you as the consumer have the right to take them to small claims? And if you do, what can you expect to recover, if anything? Does Apple have the right to stop you from selling your copy of iMovie legally?

Well, in the two hundred or so words that I have left, I'll try to answer these questions. The answer to the last is no. I'm not sure about the rest, because as I've told you before, I'm not a lawyer, and I don't even play one on TV. Having been in correspondence with one on this issue, I'm almost qualified to answer. We can take eBay out of the equation, as Apple wouldn't have a cause of action against them, in as much as they aren't doing anything illegal, beyond facilitating the sale. So, it comes down to whether Apple can stop you from selling your copy of iMovie. Again, I say no. Apple and eBay both believe the answer is yes. Who's right? (Besides me, of course.) We may never get a stand-alone copy of iMovie, so this seems like a viable alternative. After all, I'm not the one that forecasts the future, I leave that to the rumor sites.

Well, It's About Time

A word about deadlines, and lead time. So that you may receive your issue of ATPM fresh every month on the 1st, all columns, articles, and reviews must be submitted no later than the 23rd of the previous month. This time, that was Easter, so, I managed to finagle an additional two days to bang out what you're reading now. This also means that I can't really react to any news or breaking stories after that, as I would need to wait 'til next month's column to do so.

So, on Friday, April the 28th, when Apple announced that they were giving iMovie away as a free download, rendering my entire column almost pointless, I was mildly upset. And ecstatic at the same time. All of the opinions above still hold, however, I'm glad the fine folks at Apple realized a need, and attempted to fill it. Sure, they say iMovie will only work with

the later G3s and the G4, as well as the latest PowerBook, however, there have been reports that other Macs will work as well. So, I suggest you run, don't walk, on over and grab a copy[2] of iMovie for yourself. Or, for a nominal shipping fee, you can order the CD from Apple, which also includes the iMovie tutorial—at about 160 MB it's too big for an online download.

And while you're at it, you can send an iCard to Steve, thanking him for coming to the realization that not everyone needs Final Cut Pro. Except for me, of course.

72 and sunny in Redondo.

e You next time.

Disclaimer: Mike is currently searching for a female lead for "Diamond in the Rough," as the woman he originally cast is nowhere to be found. For this and other sad stories, Mike can be reached at mshields@atpm.com.

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2. http://www.apple.com/imovie/download/

BY LEE BENNETT, LBENNETT@ATPM.COM

DSL and the Mac Followup

Thanks to everyone who responded to my soapbox moment about DSL[1]. As a followup, I want to share what I've learned since last month—both from Sprint and from you.

First of all, my cancellation order from Flashcom is still pending. I'm still deciding whether or not to open a dispute case with my credit card company.

As far as Sprint is concerned, it seems that hooking up a Macintosh to a line with DSL will get you online just fine. The free MacPoET software is required, though some might have trouble finding it. Never fear—one reader helped out a lot in this matter, and his comments will appear below.

A word of notice, though. Neither I nor the ATPM staff are giving our seal of approval that you can simply install MacPoET and run a Sprint DSL connection. It's up to you to decide if you want to try it. I haven't finished trying out the connection—I only managed to try out Netscape, no email software or anything else—but I noticed a few quirks when I later tried to dial up with my modem. The modem connected, but Outlook Express wouldn't function properly. At one point, there was also an error message about SetupAP—an extension used by IPNetMonitor. Simply disabling the two files MacPoET places in the Extensions Folder solved the problem. This could be a clue as to why Sprint says it is still testing Macs using DSL.

Just last week, I noticed on EarthLink's Web site that it will offer its DSL service in central Florida. It gave the impression that it would be this year. Who knows; perhaps Earthlink has realized Sprint has DSL going in the Orlando area and will be helping it start supporting Macs.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/dslsegments.shtml

Here are some short takes from your responses:

Brock Gunter-Smith: Having gone through a struggle recently to get ADSL access for my apartment-bound Mac, I put up [a real quickie page](#)[2] addressing some of the questions people like you had/have. (Note from Lee: this Web site provided me with the most useful information for my testing. It includes links where you can obtain MacPoET. Even though his page explained things better than EarthLink did, some of Brock's information is specific to his ISP. You'll have to do your own research to see what adjustments need to be made to use MacPoET with your ISP, but if you use EarthLink, [this page](#)[3] should help—specifically the section on [configuring the TCP/IP control panel](#)[4].)

John Petko: Bell Atlantic offers DSL without the need for PPPoE, they supply a product called MacPoET. You can also use Vicom's new SurfDoubler, which is the better product.

Marc McCoy: We Mac users are used to an existence in a non-supported world. Right now I'm using my G3 with a non-Mac-supported LinkSys router, non-supported DSL modem, and poorly Mac supported ISP. Funny thing is everything works great.

Greg Alton: Despite the claims, it shouldn't be at all hard to support Macs. We have Bell Atlantic DSL, and they have some minor 'issues' with supporting Macs—they don't officially support OS 9. In reality though, most users will probably find that while they may have to be authenticated on a windows machine, DSL should work. (We use both at this house). The funny thing was that when the DSL installation guy was here installing the service on a Windows box (now dead), he said that the majority of problem issues he faces are with Windows machines. And when they choke, they choke bad. He told me a few stories about customers losing 'everything'—all their data—on Windows. He said he had yet to see a significant problem on Macs, and that 95% of the time he was done in under twenty minutes (compared to close to an hour with PCs). Post Script: Bell Atlantic's DSL does work with OS 9, but requires an update that they apparently haven't put on CD yet. Grabbed it off the Web.

Chris Dunleavy: I have (after lots of contortions) a (great!) DSL connection to my Power Mac through Frontier Communications in New York. The problem is not with TCP/IP settings (same as PC), but with how the Mac OS handles subnet addressing…which is different than a PC with Windows. Cisco DSL routers out-of-the-box, for example, need to be

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2. http://homepage.mac.com/brockgs/
3. http://help.earthlink.net/techsupport/dsl/macpoet/html/index.html
4. http://help.earthlink.net/techsupport/dsl/macpoet/html/tcpip.html

patched to deal with this issue (or you can patch at the head end). I can easily imagine how many DSL providers aren't going to want to deal with this!

E. Hunt Augustus: I had the same experience with Flashcom but they finally installed the service two days ago (after a ten-week wait), and it works beautifully. In fact, I got the multi-surfer package and have a Web server running in my home/office in addition to AirPort-enabled surfing throughout my house and backyard. Getting set up was incredibly frustrating, but it was worth the wait!

Robert Herron: DSL service for the Mac has been available in western Canada for two years. I can't believe the US telcos are so technologically backward. You would have to intentionally set out to only support PCs to end up not supporting Macs (or other platforms). Either that or you use inferior MS "educated" technical people who only learn how to write software for MS products then call themselves computer technicians/software developers. The only thing they have is a crappy piece of paper saying "Microsoft certified."

Lastly, an EarthLink DSL tech support representative pointed me to www.computer-down.com for information about MacPoET and DSL. On that page is a link to instructions[5] similar to Brock Gunter-Smith's page, above, only this one is specific to EarthLink's network.

Send your Segments submissions to editor@atpm.com.

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5.   http://www.crosswinds.net/%7Edigitalinfo/mac.html

80's Cartoons Alliance

Web: http://8ca.homepage.com/
Transformers, GoBots, G.I. Joe, MASK—it's all here!

Do you remember cartoons like *She-Ra*, *Robotech*, *Kidd Video*, *Galaxy High School*, and *Lazer Tag Academy*? Well, you probably do if you watched any Saturday morning cartoons during the 80s. On the 80's Cartoons Alliance site you can look up information on cartoons shown throughout that decade. You might notice that many of the cartoons are marketing ploys to get you to buy more Pound Puppies and to play Donkey Kong. Go figure.

MacDesktops.com

Web: http://www.macdesktops.com/
Mac evangelism on your desktop.

In my never-ending quest to find the best site for desktop wallpaper, I ran into macdesktops.com. If you're looking for wallpaper that reflects your love of the Macintosh, this is a definite bookmark! There's a wide assortment of desktop themes from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to wallpapers matching the color of your Mac. Many of the wallpapers promote Macs

in one way or another—like HAL the killer computer in Bondi blue! For more on desktop pictures, see this month's GUI Junkie.

Candystand

Web: http://www.candystand.com/
A cornucopia of fun games.

My coworkers are spending more time at their computers these days because of this Web site! Utilizing Macromedia's Shockwave, Candystand brings more Internet games to your desktop than there are packets of gum at the convenience store. By the way, the site is sponsored by LifeSavers. The whole site (including games) is shamelessly laden with ads for all kinds of bubble gums and breath mints—all under the LifeSavers banner.

Perhaps the most popular game on the site is the 18-hole putt-putt course. Up to four people can play and control the putter with a mouse. Other games include basketball and pool. You'll have hours of fun and end up with a mysterious hankering for some gummi-savers.

Find The Black Dot

Web: http://udel.edu/%7Ejgephart/fun2.htm
Get ready to be cross-eyed!

Just go to this site and try to find the black dot. Go on, I dare ya! No matter what you try to do, you'll never be able to find it, but it will always be just out of visual sight.

Here's the deal—at this Web site is a black box with a grayish grid overlaid on it. At the points where horizontal lines meet with vertical lines, there are dots. Whatever dot your eyes are focused on is always white, and black dots seem to be just outside your focus. Look toward those black dots and they become white. It's totally confusing and totally cool!

Evil Overlord

Web: http://www.eviloverlord.com/
Planning Your Future, One Step at a Time.

The evil villains in movies always lose. Even with mega-doomsday weapons and legions of loyal followers at their disposal, something goes terribly wrong, and they are defeated. Taking lessons from past failures, the Evil Overlord List is a compilation of things that a super-villain shouldn't do when trying to conquer the universe.

Movie Comments.com

Web: http://www.moviecomments.com/
Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down? You decide.

I don't like and don't trust any of the commercial movie critics. Movie houses make every effort to buy good reviews out of them. The only reviewers I trust are my friends. MovieComments.com is like having a bunch of friends going out and reviewing all the latest movies. Anyone can join and submit a review, complete with a scale from 1 to 10.

Greater Good

Web: http://www.greatergood.com
Shop for what you need. Support what you believe.

Lots of us shop online these days. At GreaterGood.com, you can shop at many of the big-name online stores and have a portion of the proceeds go toward a charitable organization. As a matter of fact, you can choose exactly which charity you want to receive the proceeds, and you can even select local charities. If you shop online, you've probably already purchased something from one of the participating retailers—there are too many to list here.
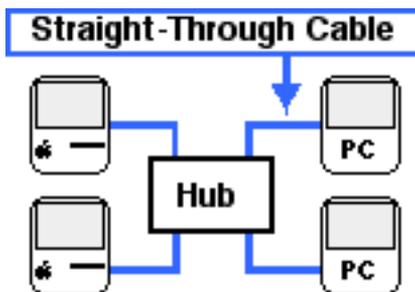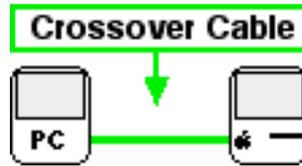
Part VIII: Macs & PCs Sharing the Same Internet Connection

Last month, in ATPM 6.04, I illustrated how to put Macs and Windows PCs on the same network[1] using software that helped one computer speak the other computer's language. While this method is useful for sharing files and printers on a mixed Mac/PC network, sharing an Internet connection between the two is a very different process. Since sharing files and sharing an Internet connection are different processes, you can generally run both simultaneously on the same network.

Before you begin, you must have your computers connected to the same network before attempting to share an Internet connection. To simplify things, I will assume you're using an Ethernet network, although this method will also work over LocalTalk. First, purchase an Ethernet hub (or switch) and an Ethernet adapter for any Mac or PC that lacks one; then connect each computer to the hub using a length of twisted-pair Ethernet cable.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/networking.shtml

If you only need to connect two computers together, you can simply use a single crossover Ethernet cable in place of the hub. The crossover cable is different from the "straight-through" Ethernet cable used in a hub-based network and will be packaged as such.
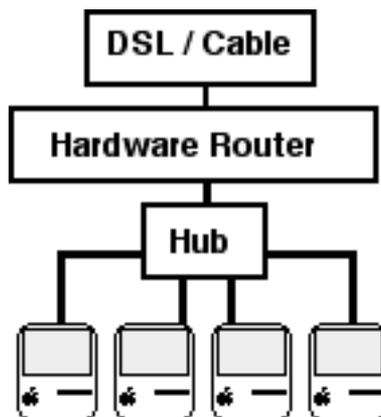

TCP/IP and the Internet In Brief

Macs and PCs can both use TCP/IP, the data transfer method that forms the basis of the World Wide Web and the Internet in general. Sharing an Internet connection involves changing each computer's TCP/IP settings. Before this can be done, you'll first need to locate the TCP/IP controls on each computer. Macs utilize the "TCP/IP" control panel, located in the Control Panels folder within the System Folder. Under Windows 95 or later, go into the Start menu and select "Control Panel" from the Settings sub-menu. The TCP/IP settings are located in the "Network" control panel. The instructions that follow list the changes that need to be made.

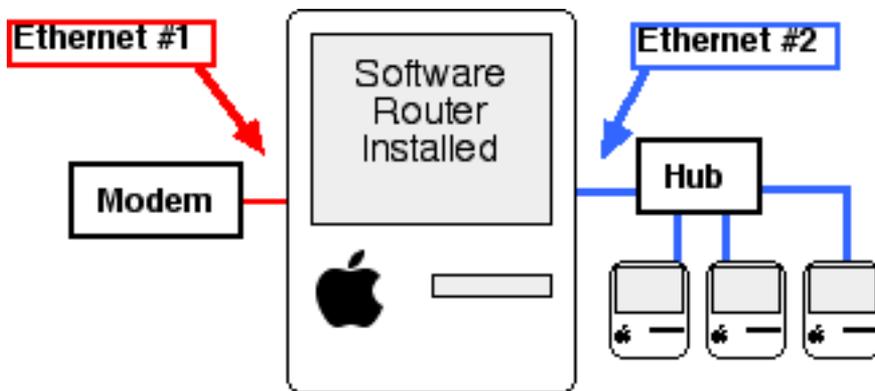## Setting Up the Internet Connection

Sharing an Internet connection requires the use of a hardware- or software-based "router" that allows more than one network computer to concurrently use the incoming Internet signal. Hardware routers typically connect directly to a DSL or cable modem connection and many incorporate a hub in a single unit. Hardware routers automatically create Internet identities for networked computers, requiring you to do little more than turn them on.

Hardware routers are generally easier to use than software routers, but they are also more expensive. If you use a dial-up modem connection, however, a software router is your only option. A software router is a software application that runs on an Internet-connected Mac. In this article, I'll refer to the Internet-connected Mac as the "server" and the other computers as "clients."

If you have a DSL or cable Internet connection and plan to use a software router, it's important to ensure your network remains secure. For more information on network security and precautions, see [ATPM 5.11](#)[2].

To use a software router with DSL or cable Internet, I highly recommend adding a second Ethernet interface to the "server" Mac. You then connect one interface to the incoming signal and the second interface to the network. This keeps the network and Internet signals separate and secure. It therefore makes sense to choose a Mac with available expansion slots as the "server."
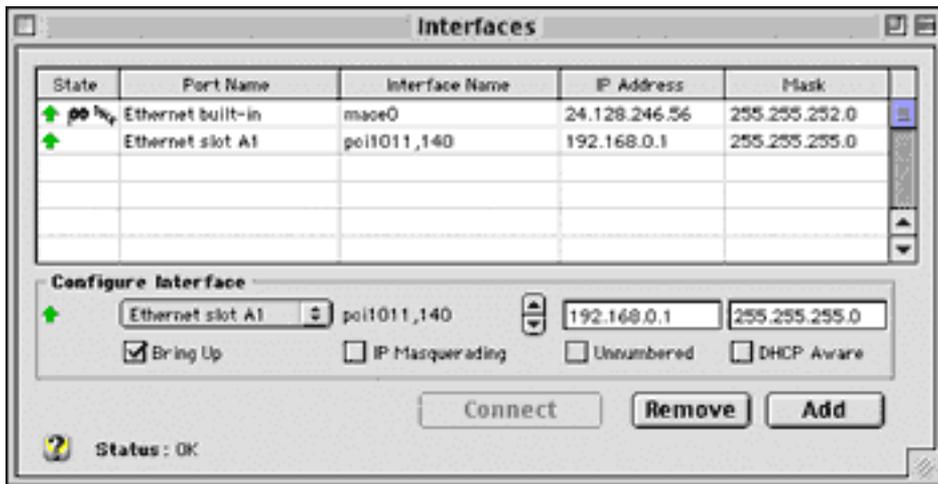

Setting Up the Server Mac

I should state that although [Sustainable Softworks' IPNetRouter](#)[3] is a sponsor of my own Threemacs.com Web site, that it was not my exclusive reason for picking it as an example software router. IPNetRouter's primary advantages include service for an unlimited number of "client" computers and regular (often weekly) software updates.

IPNetRouter includes browser-friendly, easy-to-follow setup instructions. The first time I used the program, it took me approximately three minutes (including reading time) to get it

2. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/networking.shtml
3. http://www.sustworks.com/

running. If your "server" Mac uses the recommended two Ethernet interfaces, your IPNetRouter should look similar to the figure below, with one IP address for the Internet connection and one for your network.
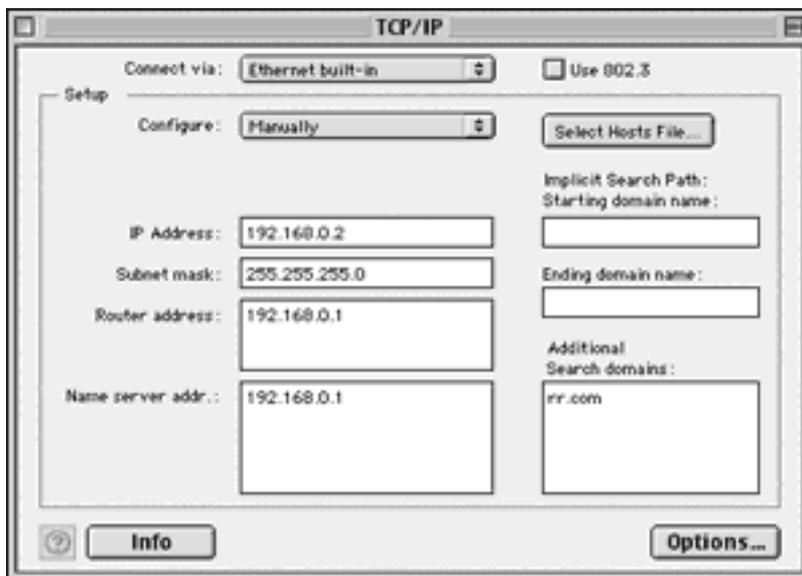

Setting Up a Client Macintosh

IPNetRouter functions as a DHCP server, common to other software routers, which "creates" Internet connections on demand for network computers. To use this, open the client Mac's TCP/IP control panel and set "Connect via" to DHCP. The client should shortly receive IP and router addresses.

If you decide to set an IP address manually, you should pick an address beginning with "192.168." (for example, 192.168.0.1), as these addresses are specifically set aside for private networks. Also make sure each computer on the network has a unique IP address. Set the

subnet mask to "255.255.255.0" and the DNS router to the server Mac's IP address or your Internet Service Provider's DNS router's address.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ▢          TCP/IP          ▤                              │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│   Connect via: [ Ethernet built-in  ▼]    ☐ Use 802.3    │
│  ─ Setup ─                                                │
│   Configure: [ Manually  ▼]      [ Select Hosts File...]  │
│                                                           │
│                                    Implicit Search Path:  │
│                                    Starting domain name:  │
│   IP Address:  [192.168.0.2      ]  [                  ]  │
│                                                           │
│   Subnet mask: [255.255.255.0    ]   Ending domain name:  │
│   Router address: [192.168.0.1   ]  [                  ]  │
│                                                           │
│                                      Additional           │
│                                      Search domains:      │
│   Name server addr.: [192.168.0.1]  [ rr.com          ]  │
│                                                           │
│   ⑦  [ Info ]                          [ Options... ]     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Setting Up a Client PC

Configuring a Windows 95/98 PC client is similar to the Mac. You can choose DHCP as your connection method, although it may also help to know how to connect manually. To do so, highlight the TCP/IP protocol connected to your network interface and click on "Properties." Select the "IP Address" tab and enter the IP address (again in the 192.168 group) and subnet mask (255.255.255.0). Enter and add the server Mac's IP address in the Gateway tab. Select the DNS Configuration tab and enter your ISP's DNS router address. You may also need to enter the server's host name if the IP address alone doesn't work. Close the Network control panel and restart your PC.

Testing the Connection

Once the client computer receives a valid IP address from the Mac server, you should be able to use any Internet application as if you were directly connected to the Internet. If the connection isn't working correctly, start by double-checking the software router's setup instructions to make sure the router is functioning properly.

If the router works for some client computers, but not for others, there may be a problem with the client's network connection. Try sharing files to or from the problem computer. If

you are unable to share files, you should reinstall the client's Ethernet software and check the Ethernet adapter's connection lights to make sure the physical side is working.

Things to Consider

It's worth noting that [Vicom](4) makes the Macintosh software routers SurfDoubler and Internet Gateway. See their Web site for features and pricing. Hardware routers are coming down in price, some dropping below $100 including rebate. Search [Dealmac](5) using the keyword "router" to check on current deals.

Some DSL or cable modem ISPs don't account for AppleTalk (file sharing) network traffic, which can cause problems with shared files on your home network when your Internet connection is active. Not all of these problems have solutions yet, but you should at least contact your ISP and ask about it if you experience that kind of problem.

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4.   http://www.vicomsoft.com/
5.   http://www.dealmac.com/
6.   http://www.threemacs.com

Part IV: Hardware

Introduction

Last month we discussed [software](1). Digital audio software can only reach its true potential, though, when combined with hardware. The G3 and G4 feature 16-bit 44.1 kHz audio input and output, and the new iMacs have a decent sound system when Harman Kardon's iSub is added. But both serious hobbyists and budding professionals need a dedicated audio interface. The prices range from about $250 to over $13,000, depending on the system level desired.

Interface Basics

All audio interfaces consist of two parts: (1) a data converter comprising an ADC and a DAC (see [Part One](2)), and (2) a DAT I/O, which translates digital data to and from a specific format (e.g., S/PDIF, AES/EBU, or ADAT) to allow transfer between the computer and a digital storage medium. Traditionally, these interfaces connect to a Mac by way of a card slot (originally the NuBus card introduced with the Mac II, and more recently, the PCI slot standard on all Power Macs). The introduction of the iMac has forced new solutions. The current use of USB is inadequate, due to bandwidth limitations. FireWire offers the greatest promise, but one that is yet unfulfilled.

USB Audio Interfaces

USB has replaced the old serial ports once common on Macs. As such, it was only a matter of time before the same MIDI interfaces that previously converted data from Mac serial ports

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/digitalaudio.shtml
2. http://www.atpm.com/6.02/digitalaudio.shtml

would be updated to, or replaced by, USB interfaces. To bring audio to computers without card slots, namely iMacs, a few USB audio interfaces have also been developed. USB is not an ideal solution for audio, though. The bandwidth is far too limited to carry the large amount of information required to represent multiple tracks of digital audio. For iMac owners, however, it's the only solution at present; iMac DV owners can look forward to the day when FireWire interfaces arrive, but until then USB is the only option. Here are a couple of examples:

Roland UA-30 and UA-100 Audio Canvas

Web: http://www.edirol.com
Price: $248 for UA-30; $448 for UA-100
Pros: Inexpensive, iMac compatible, UA-100 includes effects and two pairs of MIDI ports.
Cons: Limited data bandwidth, no mention of Mac support on Web site.

SwissSonic USB Studio D

Web: http://www.swissonic.com
Price: $849
Pros: XLR, 1/4", and RCA analog in and out, iMac compatible.
Cons: Expensive for a USB interface, limited data bandwidth.

Consumer PCI Audio Interfaces (Under $1000)

For owners of G3s, G4s, and older Power Macs, PCI is the way to go. A wide variety of consumer interfaces is available for under $1000 as Digidesign's monopoly of years past has been broken by Mark of the Unicorn, Sonorus, and now MidiMan. Creative Labs will soon join the fray with a Mac version of their SoundBlaster Platinum card, which they debuted at the last Macworld Expo[3]. You might consider:

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3. http://www.atpm.com/6.02/barline.shtml

MidiMan Delta DIO 2496

Web: http://www.midiman.com
Price: $300
Pros: 24 bit/96K, analog configurable to +4 or -10, built-in digital mixer.
Cons: System requirements (G4 or G3 with 128 MB of RAM), unproven Mac support.

Digidesign Toolbox XE

Web: http://www.digi001.com
Price: $545
Pros: 24 bit, ProTools LE included, four ins and out with analog and digital combined.
Cons: 192 MB RAM recommended, more expensive than comparable Mac/PC cards.

Sonorus STUD/IO

Web: http://www.sonorus.com
Price: $849
Pros: 16 channels ADAT, plus S/PDIF and stereo analog, 24 bit/96K, compatible with third-party software.
Cons: No packaged software.

MOTU 2408

Web: http://www.motu.com
Price: $995
Pros: 24 bit, 24 channels selectable between ADAT, TDIFF, and analog (eight only); expandable with add-on modules (takes price into $2000-$3000 range).
Cons: Included AudioSuite software is just stripped-down Digital Performer.

Digidesign Digi001

Price: $995
Pros: Numerous inputs and outputs (XLR, 1/4", S/PDIF, ADAT), two MIDI ports, ProTools LE included.
Cons: Not compatible with any third-party sequencers.

Professional PCI Audio Interfaces and Hardware ($7000-$13,000+)

Interfaces in this category are not for the hobbyist or starving musician. They are for the professional engineer willing to invest real money to build a state-of-the-art studio. As often said in the context of luxury cars, "If you have to ask how much it is, you probably can't afford it." This high-end market is still dominated by Digidesign. Consider:

Digidesign ProTools

Price: $5,995 for ProTools|24; $7,995 for ProTools|24 MIX; $9,995 for ProTools|24 MIX-plus.
Pros: 24 bit/96K, up to 64 tracks with effects and EQ, ProTools 5.0, TDM and AudioSuite Plugins.
Cons: Expensive, requires two PCI slots (except ProTools 24|MIX) and a Digidesign Audio Interface (888|24 I/O ($3,695), 882|20 IO ($1,245), 1622 ($1,595), or ADAT Bridge IO ($1,245)).

Glossary

+4, -10: Two standard settings of amplitude in analog recording. Consumer devices are generally set to -10 while professional devices are set to +4.

1/4": A standard analog audio jack, either unbalanced (tip-sleeve) or balanced (tip, ring, sleeve). The balanced version reduces noise in the same way that an XLR cable does. Balanced 1/4" cables are also used to carry stereo signals.

ADAT: Alesis's 8-track digital tape deck. Uses a proprietary optical format also known as Lightpipe.

S/PDIF: Sony Philips Digital Interface Format. A digital audio format most commonly found in consumer devices. Uses either RCA or optical connections.

TDIFF: Tascam Digital Interface File Format. The proprietary format used by Tacsam's DA-88 digital 8-track tape deck.

XLR: A balanced audio line consisting of two wires carrying the same signal 180˚ out of phase and a third ground wire. When the signals are placed back in phase, any line noise is eliminated. (Note: XLR stands for "ground, left, right," and these cables can also carry stereo signals.)

Next Month: Digital Audio and the Mac Part V: Digital Audio on the Internet.

Part II: Help, I Can't Draw!

If you read <u>last month's column on copyright</u>[1], you may be forgiven for thinking that, if you can't draw, then your Web site's gonna be pretty boring! Don't worry; this month I'll be looking at where you can obtain images, buttons, and other graphics for your Web site. There are also lots of links where you can find out more information on the areas covered

Okay, first we'll take a look at where we can get images from.

- **Hire a graphic designer to churn out a few buttons.** This may be a bit expensive for your average home page, but if you are designing a page that is unlikely to change often, then it may be worthwhile.

- **Buy ready made images or use free images and clip art.** You can find many free images on the Internet, as well as many CDs full of photos and clip art in your local computer store. Bear in mind that most clip art CDs will say 'Windows Only,' but you will find that the images work fine on your Mac, because they should be in standard formats.

- **Use graphic creation software.** There are several programs that will create images for you with little or no effort.

Second, let's look at the different graphics you might find on a Web site. Go on, take a look at a few of your favorite Web sites, particularly ones where you like the layout. You can go now if you like. I'll still be here when you get back.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/graphicsandtheinternet.shtml

Hello, back again. What did you find? Chances are you found graphics for…

- Logos
- Page headings
- Buttons
- Photos
- Cartoons
- Illustrations
- Background images

Throughout this article we will be making a Web site about Sarah Michelle Gellar, of *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* fame. We will go through the list above using different methods of obtaining the images.

Logos

If you are designing a site for a client, then nine times out of ten they will already have a logo. However if you are creating a personal Web site, you may need a hand.

Our Web site is going to be called "Gellar, Gellar, Gellar, Uh!" (after the line in "Summer Lovin'" in *Grease*), so we need a nice logo. We could just go into GraphicConverter[2] and make a nice logo like this…

Gellar Gellar Gellar. Uh!

There's nothing wrong with Tekton Bold, Hot Pink or Graphic Converter, but it's hardly professional-looking is it? Okay then. It looks a bit rank. Lets try a piece of software called Typestyler from Strider Software. You can download a demo of this from their Web site[3]. It

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2. http://www.atpm.com/5.02/page12.shtml
3. http://www.typestyler.com

is a fully workable demo for 60 whole days, so you should be able to get a feel for the program in that time.

This logo isn't much different from our original one really, but this is where Typestyler comes in to its own. Using the Shaper tool we can bend, twist and change the path of our lettering. I've used the 'Vertical Arc Flat Bottom' library effect to create the text below.

It's looking a bit better now. By the way, ignore the blue lines. these are to help you adjust the shape. Another effect available is 'Double Arc Left.' Here, I've made the word 'Uh!!" fit under the Gellar's. It looks very nice but it still needs that added extra.

If we open up the Style Workshop menu, we can add more visual effects to our words. We can change colors, add shadows, and add outlines and patterns. Below I have added a black outline, changed the text color to blue, and embossed the text—this gives it a 3D effect.

Okay, so that's one part of the logo finished. Let's sort out the 'Uh!!' bit. I've chosen the font Litterbox for this part. Litterbox is a font that looks like messy handwriting. *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* deals with vampires in the TV show (hence the vampire slayer part), so let's make the 'Uh!!' look like it's been drawn in blood.

The font is fine for this use, as it's a bit shaky. You couldn't really use a nice neat font like Geneva or Helvetica for this as blood just doesn't draw in straight lines. Believe me, I've tried.

We'll change the writing to a nice blood red, and using the 'Chisel' tool in the 'Style Workshop' menu we'll give it a bit of body. Perfect: nice and bloody.

Once these elements are all combined, we can add some finishing touches. I've used the font Sand here to give a bit of information about the site.

So here it is…the finished logo. It's not going to win the international best logo of the year award, but it serves its purpose, and it certainly looks better than the one we made earlier.

Page Headings

Page headings are another area on your Web page where you might like to use some graphics. You could very easily use plain text for your headings, and it's perfectly acceptable to do so. However, as this is a graphics column, I don't think I could get away with leaving it at that.

For our Web site we want to make headings for each of our three sections. These are 'Home Page,' 'Gellar Gallery,' and 'Gellar Links.' I could just use Typestyler again, but let's try something different. Lets go Web surfing again. Point your browser of choice to CoolText.com[4].

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4. http://www.cooltext.com

On the left hand side of the page you can see a list of around twenty different text styles. Click on one that takes your fancy, and you'll be taken to the text imaging screen.

From this screen you can choose what your title is to say and what font, size, and color it will be in. You can also change the style again if you want to.

When you are happy with your selections, press the Process Text button and wait until Cooltext does its work. I must say, at this point, that Cooltext is a very popular utility so at some times it can get very very busy, and therefore very very slow.

When it's finished, you will then be presented with your finished masterpiece. Here's what my home page title will look like.

Make sure that you download the image to your hard drive now, as Cooltext will only keep it on its servers for less than an hour.

While we are at Cooltext we can make our Web site buttons too…

Buttons

Buttons can be used to link to other area of the site. It's a good idea to make your buttons consistent, all over the site. If you use different types of buttons, you will confuse your visitors and they just won't know what to press.

Cooltext can also make buttons too. Go back to the Cooltext home page and select the buttons option. You are given a choice of several different buttons styles. Once you have made your selection you can edit the text and color as before.

Here are the buttons Cooltext produced for our site.

You can find a [Cooltext FAQ](#)[5].

Photographs

Photographs can liven up any page, but how can we get hold of some good photographs?

Well, the first option is to take them ourselves. As long as you can press a button, you can take a decent picture. The good thing about most modern cameras is that they are simple and easy to use, and you can get some good results too.

If you are unsure about your photographic skills, a good way to get ahead is to buy or borrow a half-decent camera. Whether you go for traditional or digital, make sure it has basic features such as auto-focus, automatic exposure and automatic flash. For more information about choosing a camera visit [Photography Review's camera section](#)[6].

If you are using a compact camera, then you will need some film. There are many different film formats on the market, but the main ones for people like you and I will be either 35mm or APS. If you are not sure whether your camera takes 35mm film or APS film, take the camera to the shop you are going to buy your film from.

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5. http://www.cooltext.com/faq.php3
6. http://www.photographyreview.com/reviews/

Camera film is available in different 'speeds.' This refers to how quickly the film reacts when exposed to light. Slow speeds take the longest and are suitable for taking pictures in brighter conditions. Faster speeds are more suited at taking pictures in duller conditions. The speed of a film will be followed by the letters 'ISO' on the packaging. Rough guide to film speeds:

Speed	Conditions
100 ISO	Bright Sunlight, Snow.
200 ISO	Outdoors, average weather.
400 ISO	Indoors, Overcast, Flash Photography, Moving Subjects.

For a more in-depth guide to films and photography visit this site[7].

So, if you have managed to get hold of an easy-to-use camera, then all you need to worry about are your pictures. Plan what you want to photograph beforehand, as you will save yourself time, money, and film.

Once you have snapped away at anything in sight, you will need to transfer the pictures to your Mac. Digital camera owners can look all smug now, knowing they can send it down a wire with relative ease. Those of us with more traditional cameras have two options.

1. Scan them in to our Mac.

2. Have somebody transfer them on to CD.

If you only have a few pictures, I would scan them. It doesn't take too long, and the pictures appear almost instantly onto your Mac. However, if you have a lot of pictures to be transferred (or you don't have a scanner) you can get your pictures put onto a CD. When you bring your film in to the chemist to be developed, ask them to transfer them on to a CD at the same time. It may take a bit longer and be a bit more expensive than just a set of paper prints, but it will save you lots of time and hard disk space. (Money Saving Tip: Although you can get the pictures transferred after you have had the film processed, most processors offer the service cheaper if it is done at the same time as the original processing.)

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7. http://www.camerareview.com/photo101/

The other way of obtaining photographs for your Web site is to use somebody else's photographs. If you need a photo of an aerial view of a volcano, the chances are that you don't have the resources available to snap this with your Canon AF7. This is where photo libraries come in.

Photo libraries have vast stocks of photos covering a huge variety of subjects, including many that you could never create yourself. Most of them supply images on CD-ROM so that they are ready to use. However, these services are not free. If you wish to use a photo you will need to buy a license to use that image. Once you have bought the license for an image, you can use it as you see fit, as long as you don't breach the licenser's conditions. These conditions will normally grant you a non-exclusive right to the image (meaning others can use it too), so don't be surprised if you find "your" image popping up elsewhere. Visit the PhotoDisc Web site[8] to find out more.

If you are making a non-commercial Web site, then Free Foto[9] has lots of photos, covering a wide range of subjects, which are free to non-profit Web sites.

Cartoons

Some Web sites have an amusing cartoon strip. These can be a big pull to visitors, especially if it is changed regularly. If you would like a cartoon strip, but can't draw for toffee then you've got three options.

1. Scan in *Dilbert* from the newspaper and upload it to your site each day.

2. Hire somebody to produce a daily cartoon strip.

3. Use the content from another site.

Let's go through them in order.

1. Don't do this. It's illegal. Go back to last month's feature on copyright[10]. Do not pass Go. Do not collect $200.

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8. http://www.photodisc.com
9. http://www.freefoto.com
10. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/graphicsandtheinternet.shtml

2. A great way of providing original content for your site. A great way of using up lots of cash. Hiring an artist to do any job can be expensive. Unless you know someone who could do this for you on the cheap, then I suggest you check out the Professional Cartoonists Index[11]. I doubt you'll find one who will do it for free, though most cartoonists will settle for ten Mars Bars and 200 cups of coffee!

3. Hmmm. This option sounds as illegal as the first. Well it could be. If you're just going to take a cartoon of another Web site and upload it to yours, then go back to last month's feature on copyright. Do not pass Go. Do not collect $200.

However, there are some wonderful sites out there that will let you put their cartoon strip on your Web site, and, not only that, they'll also update it regularly too. Ah, it's a wonderful life. Go to the Gibbleguts Web site[12]. Here you can obtain some HTML code, which you can just cut and paste into your homepage. You then have your very own cartoon that's updated daily. Easy, eh?

Illustrations

If you go to Yahoo! and select Computers and Internet > Graphics > Clip Art or do a search for 'free clipart' you'll find lots of sites offering you lots of pictures, buttons, and other objects that you can use on your Web sites. We want to find a vampire bat for our *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* homepage.

Art Today[13] offers a clip art search facility where you can type in 'Bats' and it will churn out lots of pictures of bats. You will need to register if you want to use this facility. Registration is free for a limited selection, but if you want access to all of the pictures, you will need to pay up.

We found some bat pictures at Barry's Clip Art[14]. Barry's Clip Art requires us to credit the image to its site. Make sure you read the Terms and Conditions of any Web site that offers you a free service. You may find that you will need to give them a link or credit. Some will only let you use the images on a home page or non-profit site. In this case, we are required to use the credit '© 1999-(current year), http://www.barrysclipart.com.'

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11. http://www.cagle.com
12. http://www.gibbleguts.com/cartoons/gibbletoons.html
13. http://www.arttoday.com
14. http://www.barrysclipart.com/clipart/halloween/

If you are going to use clip art on your Web site, it is a good idea to keep the styles consistent. Try and use clip art from the same author, as this will look more professional than using a variety of different styles that don't sit well together.
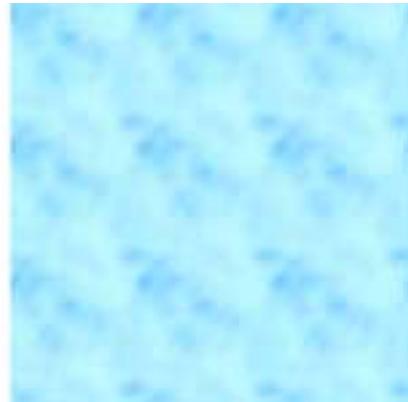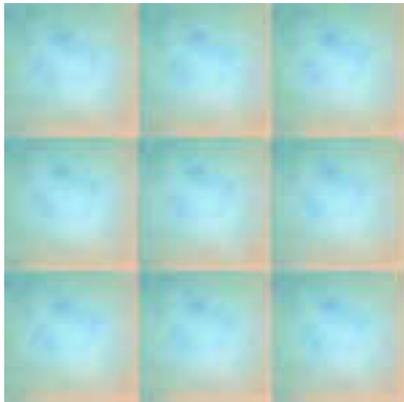
Backgrounds

We need to find a background for our site, as plain old white can be a bit boring. Go to Free Tiled Backgrounds[15] that we found by visiting The Free Site[16]. I chose the background below for our Web site. You may think that it's a bit small for a background, but when it is displayed in our browsers it will be tiled so that it covers the entire page.

Here's some hints for choosing backgrounds. Choose one that is subtle and fairly light. The last thing you want is a background that makes your text difficult to read and distracts from the content. Remember it's a background, not a foreground.

If you are using a tiled background, make sure you use a 'seamless tile.' This means that when your image is tiled next to itself, it appears to continue on to the next tile. Here's an example of a 'seamless tile' (right) and a 'seamed tile' (left).

You won't always want a background on your Web page, but the background function can be very useful for menus too. If we take the background tile we had from before and load it into GraphicConverter, we can change it into a menu background.
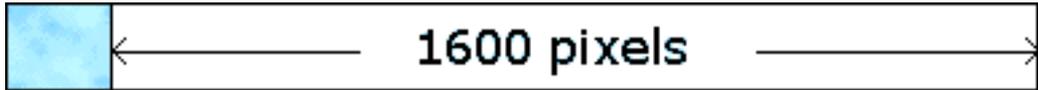
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15. http://visionsnet.com/backgrounds/index.html
16. http://www.thefreesite.com/

Once you've loaded up GraphicConverter (or any other package), resize the image to the width of your menu. We want our image to be 120 pixels wide so we choose the scale option and enter the required information.

We need to adjust the right-hand margin on the menu bar too; otherwise it will keep repeating itself. We need to add a big enough margin so that it won't repeat, even on big monitors. We'll add an extra 1600 pixels. This should be enough.

In case you are wondering how this will look on the Web page, here is a screen grab below.

I hope you've found this useful. Please remember that if you're using a free graphics service, such as Cooltext or one of the clip art sites, it is courteous to credit and link back to them. Some sites state that this as part of their terms and conditions, so make sure you read them carefully.

You can take a look at this finished Web page[17], incorporating the various services shown in this article. It's not a complete site, and the internal links don't work, but it should give you an idea of what can be done with little or no graphic skills.

Next month we'll be looking at JPEGs and compression. If you have any questions or comments about this series then please email me at gosborne@atpm.com.

17. http://bite.to/gellar-gellar-gellar-uh

Question: What do you call a duck that uses a computer to break into other computers?

Answer: A Quacker

Desktop Pictures XIII: Animals

ATPM's assistant Webmaster, Lee Bennett, offers his second batch of new desktop pictures. The images are of various terrain Lee photographed during his autumn 1999 vacation through the northwest states and British Columbia, Canada. Additional images at 1024 x 768 resolution will be made available in future months. All the photos from the trip can now be viewed in his online photo album[1].

This month's pictures[2] feature some of the wildlife photographed during the trip. From Yellowstone National Park are photos of elk, bison, and coyote. And from the Grand Teton National Park, a moose bull and cow hanging out in the marsh.

All photos were taken with a Canon AE-1 using a 35–200mm zoom lens and Kodak Gold 200ASA 35mm film. Digitizing was performed on Kodak Picture CDs at the time of film processing. Resampling and retouching were performed with Adobe Photoshop 4.01 for Macintosh.

If you haven't seen the older parts of the series, they are: Yellowstone National Park[3], Drops[4], Toronto[5], Niagara Falls[6], Monaco[7], Montréal[8], Bahamas[9], Clouds[10], Aerial[11], Made with Macs[12], Landscapes[13], Northwest[14], Animals[15].

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1. http://www.dtpbylee.com/vacation
2. http://www.atpm.com/6.05/animals/
3. http://www.atpm.com/5.03/yellowstone.shtml
4. http://www.atpm.com/5.05/drops/
5. http://www.atpm.com/5.07/toronto/
6. http://www.atpm.com/5.08/niagara/
7. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/monaco/
8. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/montreal/
9. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/bahamas/
10. http://www.atpm.com/5.12/clouds/
11. http://www.atpm.com/6.01/aerial/
12. http://www.atpm.com/6.02/madewithmacs/

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS 8.5 and Newer Go to the "Appearance" control panel. Click on the "Desktop" tab at the top of the window. Press the "Place Picture..." button in the bottom right corner, then select the desired image. By default, it will show you the images in the "Desktop Pictures" subfolder of your "Appearance" folder in the System Folder, however you can select images from anywhere on your hard disk.

After you select the desired image file and press "Choose," a preview will appear in the Appearance window. The "Position Automatically" selection is usually fine. You can play with the settings to see if you like the others better. You will see the result in the little preview screen.

If you are satisfied with the selection, click on "Set Desktop" in the lower right corner of the window. That's it! Should you ever want to get rid of it, just go to the desktop settings again and press "Remove Picture."

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1 Go to the "Desktop Patterns" control panel. Click on "Desktop Pictures" in the list on the left of the window, and follow steps similar to the ones above.

Random Desktop Pictures If you drag a folder of pictures onto the miniature desktop in the Appearance or Desktop Pictures control panel, your Mac will choose one from the folder at random when it starts up.

DeskPicture An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, reviewed[16] in issue 5.10 and available for download[17].

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13. http://www.atpm.com/6.03/landscapes
14. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/northwest/
15. http://www.atpm.com/6.05/animals/
16. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml
17. http://www.peircesw.com/DeskPicture.html

Alsoft DiskWarrior 2.0.2

The DiskWarrior Extension, a portion of DiskWarrior, <u>reviewed in ATPM 6.03</u>[1], has been updated to version 2.0.2. This version adds compatibility with Mac OS 9.04—versions of the extension prior to 2.0.2 would disable themselves at startup.

For users of Macs that require 9.0.4, a bootable CD containing both this version of the OS and version 2.0.2 of the DiskWarrior Extensions is available for $12.95 plus $5.00 shipping ($7.95 outside of the US and Canada).

Auction Action Tracker 2.7.8

This eBay tracking utility <u>reviewed in ATPM 5.11</u>[2] has been updated to version 2.7.8. The most noticeable change is a fix taking into account changes made to eBay's bidding system. Also, several interface changes have been made. Reserve auctions are now properly displayed in the status window. When placing a bid, the quantity now defaults to 1. Items on the Ban List can now be viewed directly in the browser. Finally, the option-key modifiers no longer work when Auction Action Tracker is in the background.

Extension Overload 5.0

Extension Overload 5.0 is out, and the changes since our <u>last ATPM Update</u>[3] include the addition of the extensions and control panels in Mac OS 9.0.4, bringing the total to 2950 covered items. The update also includes some small cosmetic changes to the interface and better support for non-English systems. A bug was also squished which caused some users to crash when scrolling with virtual memory off.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.03/diskwarrior.shtml
2. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/aat.shtml
3. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/update.shtml

Finale 2000

Since Finale 2000 was [reviewed in issue 6.01](#)[4], Coda has released three incremental updates. Version 2000a fixed most of the reported bugs (there were surprisingly few for a major upgrade), 2000b corrected a handful more, and 2000c adds a new feature: Smart Score and MidiScan conversion (in conjunction with their new partnership with Musictek). If you've already upgraded to 2000b, the "c" revision is only worthwhile for these features. Some advice from personal experience: if you're using OMS or Free MIDI you'll need to reset the MIDI Setup (under the MIDI menu) to access either one.

Handspring Visor Deluxe

One of the advantages the [Visor Deluxe](#)[5] has over the Palm line of PDAs is its USB connection to the computer. One of the downsides is that this necessitates the use of a custom version of Palm Desktop to be able to use the USB connection. For several months, this meant using the outdated Palm Desktop 2.1. Recently, Handspring released an update to version 2.6. The most noticeable difference is the Instant Palm Desktop menu—now, most of the screens of the HotSync application can be accessed from this menu. Also, the update is supposed to fix a syncing problem with OS 9.04, although the Read Me contains a release date of February 2000. A serial number, located on the battery door of the Visor, is required for the download.

MacHeadlines Pro 1.9.1

This is a maintenance release of the news/stock ticker [reviewed in ATPM 5.10](#)[6]. The most noticeable difference is the software's change in ownership to Aladdin Systems Holdings, Inc., which purchased Trexar Technologies in late March.

Macster PR 4.0

We just [reviewed Macster PR 3.5 in the last issue](#)[7], but the client was entirely rewritten for PR 4.0, so we think it is worth noting. The client feels much more robust now, and is really very usable at this point. The interface feels more Mac-like, too. Besides Macster, MacStar, and

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4. http://www.atpm.com/6.01/finale.shtml
5. http://www.atpm.com/5.12/visor.shtml
6. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/macheadlinespro.shtml
7. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/mp3roundup2.shtml

Rapster, Napster itself announced that they will develop their own Mac client for their controversial free music download, exchange, and chat service. Gotta love those names…

Voodoo3 3000 PCI

Although the 3dfx does not officially support the Mac with the Voodoo3 line of graphics accelerators, they certainly have been busy trying to make sure stuff is working. Since the Voodoo3 3000 PCI was first reviewed in ATPM 6.02[8], there have been two updates to the beta drivers. The latest update brings the driver to version b12. There are two aspects to this update. First, some 2D issues have been fixed from b11. Second, basic RAVE support has been included. Although not complete, it is now possible to play Bugdom and Nanosaur. According to 3dfx, other games have not been tested.

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There are far too many Mac products these days for us to review each one, or even keep up with all the ones we have reviewed. Indeed, many shareware authors are revving their products more than once a month! The Update section is where we acknowledge significant new versions of products that we have previously reviewed. If new features, bug fixes, or other revisions are substantial enough to change our assessment of a piece of software, we will generally publish a full review of the new version.

Send update information to update@atpm.com. *Reviewing in* ATPM *is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at* reviews@atpm.com

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8.   http://www.atpm.com/6.02/voodoo3.shtml

BY PAUL FATULA, PFATULA@ATPM.COM

AlphaSmart 3000IR

Company: AlphaSmart, Inc.
Web: http://www.alphasmart.com
Price: $224 (or, without IR capabilities, $199)

As much as I love my Wall Street PowerBook, it spends a lot more time sitting on my desk at home that I thought it would when I purchased a portable computer. It's just too big and heavy, not to mention fragile and expensive to replace, for me to carry it around unless I'm sure I'll be needing it. What I wouldn't give for a nice, small, two-pound portable that I can drop, pick up, and keep using…

Enter the AlphaSmart 3000IR. Don't get me wrong, this is not going to replace your PowerBook. But for tasks like taking notes at a meeting, it's a godsend. Though mainly marketed towards schools as a teaching tool, I find it a handy portable word processor, bare-bones but well thought-out, doing just what I want it to do, and just the way I'd expect it to.

The Basics

The AlphaSmart 3000IR is basically a keyboard, with a few connectivity ports and a four-line, 40-characters-per-line LCD screen. It's enclosed in a translucent blue-green shell, which reminded me a little of the long-lost eMate. It runs (anywhere from 200 to 500 hours, according to the manufacturer — all I can say is the batteries never ran out over two weeks of use) on three AA batteries, making it perfect for all-day use.

It has eight files (with optional password protection) into which you can type, each file holding about ten pages worth of text. You won't write any novels on the AlphaSmart, but that's not what it's made for. Use it all day, then hook it up to your printer and print out your notes, or hook it up to your computer and send the text to whatever program you like. A Find function allows searching through multiple files, which I found essential since I could never remember whether the Web site meeting was in "file 2" or "file 6," etc. There's a spell check feature, which works quite well, and can be disabled by teachers if the AlphaSmart is being used in a school, so students can't "cheat."

It comes with an impressive, proof-read, and complete manual, which is extremely well indexed. Literally, every feature of the AlphaSmart is covered. Manuals are also available in PDF form on AlphaSmart's Web site, as I was pleased to find one night when I realized I'd left the manual at the office. Yes, I read the manual cover-to-cover, though that's definitely not necessary in order to use the AlphaSmart. (Literally, hit the "on/off" switch and start typing.) The basics for using the AlphaSmart are printed on a "QuickGuide" found on the back of the AlphaSmart: like many other things about this product, simple and elegant. Unlike other companies, which hide contact information in the hope that you won't pester them, AlphaSmart provides you its mailing address, phone number, fax number, Web address, and email address, right on the back of the unit.

I haven't yet mentioned the single best thing about the AlphaSmart: the loaner program. If after reading this review, you find yourself thinking…sounds interesting, but I'm not sure…the company is happy to lend you one so you can try it out. All you pay is the cost of shipping it back when the loan period ends. At the risk of sounding too much like an infomercial, you really have nothing to lose.
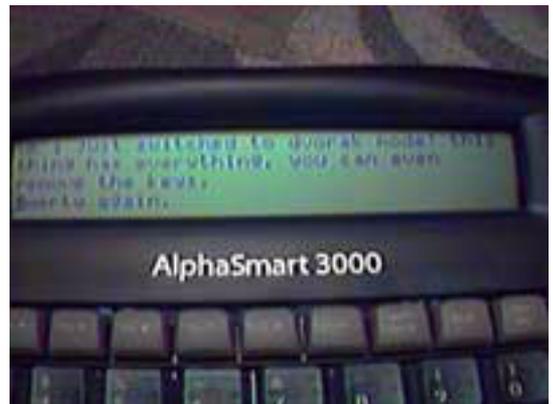
Using the AlphaSmart

While it's a basic, bare-bones product at heart, the AlphaSmart generally handles the details quite well, making it easy to use. There are "Find" and "Print" buttons dedicated to those functions, but the AlphaSmart also responds to the standard Macintosh command keys for those functions, which is generally how I ended up accessing them. Copying, pasting, and cutting text are also possible, though it takes a little getting used to: the cursor is always on a character, rather than before one, as it is on a Mac, so at first I found myself being off by one character when selecting a bunch of text. There's no Undo command, but there is a Recover command, to restore the last 40 characters you deleted, or an entire file, in case you clear an entire file and later decide you want it back. Arrow keys let you move about, and you can

scroll the document one screen at a time if you're searching for something. Home and End keys take you to the beginning and end of a file.

The keyboard itself is definitely not the most comfortable I've ever used, and I wouldn't want to use it for prolonged typing. (I had initially thought of using it to write this review, but decided to stick to my Mac, both because of the keyboard and the small screen.) For the price, however, I can't complain; it just isn't reasonable to expect to find a PowerBook-quality keyboard here. I was a bit surprised, however, at how noisy the keyboard is, especially considering that the AlphaSmart is primarily marketed to be used in classrooms, one per student. (The AlphaSmart itself, by the way, is silent.) Of course it doesn't approach an old IBM keyboard (the most comfortable by far I've ever used, but also the noisiest), but it is louder than a standard Mac keyboard. That said, I used it in a variety of settings, including large lecture halls, and no one complained about it or threw me evil glances.

One thing that did impress me about the keyboard is that the AlphaSmart is pre-programmed for not just the popular QWERTY arrangement, but for the superior Dvorak as well (and for special one-handed keyboards). The keys themselves can be popped off of the keyboard and rearranged to match the keyboard arrangement you choose, and the manual shows each of the four possible keyboard layouts. Command keys are remapped to the new keyboard layout, unlike some other implementations of Dvorak I've come across, which means you don't have to keep QWERTY in the back of your mind when you want to perform a function.

The screen is better than this picture would lead you to believe. It is reflective, but not enough so to cause a problem. I did, of course, occasionally find myself wishing it were larger: it takes a long time to scroll to the middle of a ten-page file going four lines at a time, and if you are reading back text you typed, the scrolling is pretty constant.

AlphaSmart 3000

The Find command makes up for some of the scrolling difficulties, if you know what you're looking for. It's fast, and, as I mentioned before, able to search through all eight of the files the AlphaSmart stores. It also remembers the last thing you searched for, although I found that to be more trouble that it's worth. On your Mac when you do a Find, your previous

search request is highlighted, so if you don't want to redo that find, you can just type something else over it. The AlphaSmart, however, doesn't work that way. You have to backspace over your previous request. Since it's quite rare in practice that I want to do the same find twice in a row (and if I do, I use Find Again—yes, Command-G is supported for that), I constantly had to remember to backspace over my old request before I could enter a new one. A find request is limited to 16 characters, but in practice, that's enough for a word or two, or for a full name, and so sufficient for the overwhelming majority of finds you'll want to perform.

While I used the AlphaSmart as a note taker, I should note that that's not its only possible use. The word processor is just one "applet" that comes pre-loaded in the AlphaSmart. There are also a calculator and a typing tutor program. It is possible to load other applets into the AlphaSmart, although only the standard three are listed on the AlphaSmart Web site. (Personally, I'd love to see a vi implementation for AlphaSmart, but I admit I'm probably the only person with that particular hankering.)

Printing

The AlphaSmart supports printing to a wide variety of printers, at least, alas, in theory. A menu lets you select from Epson, StyleWriter, HP, Citizen, or even an ImageWriter. The printer port takes a standard Mac printer cable (you can't print to a USB-only printer), and printing by infrared is supported in the IR model. You cannot control the formatting of the hard copy: it's double spaced, and there's only one font and size supported. That's not a big deal: you're not going to use an AlphaSmart to write any documents in which formatting is everything anyway; you just want a quick hardcopy so you can share your notes with a friend. I tried printing to a variety of printers, and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. The obvious workaround when printing doesn't work right is to transfer the text to your Mac and print from there…which, frankly, is probably more convenient than unplugging your printer from your Mac and hooking it up to the AlphaSmart anyway. Still, the print function of the AlphaSmart needs work. Here are some specifics, from printers I tested on:

I printed successfully to an HP DeskJet 870. The entire file was sent to the printer (via serial cable) before printing started, but the sending process was fast (a few seconds for a three page document).

Printing to my StyleWriter II was a mixed bag. A short file printed successfully (again, serial cable), but when I tried a longer file, I only got a few lines, after which the AlphaSmart hung. (Fortunately, pressing the escape key cancels printing in such a case.) Unlike the DeskJet, the StyleWriter printed as it received the data from the AlphaSmart: in the failure case, only 20% of the file was sent (according to the AlphaSmart's display) before it hung up.

I was very impressed by my printing to an HP LaserJet 4MP via infrared. I hit the Print button, and the AlphaSmart realized there was no serial cable attached, and looked for IR. It found and correctly identified the IR printer I was printing to, even though I had left my preferences set for the StyleWriter. The file was sent to the printer, and printed without any trouble.

Finally, I tried printing to an HP DeskWriter 600, admittedly quite an old model, but one which still works fine with current Macs (given a serial port, of course). It froze almost immediately, printing nothing, and the AlphaSmart didn't respond to the escape key, as it had for the Stylewriter. However, when I unplugged the serial cable from the AlphaSmart, it unfroze, and appeared to be searching for the printer, so I plugged the cable back in. The result was that the entire file was printed, but all on a single line, making for a completely unreadable line of blocks. Repeated attempts to print to this printer returned the same result.

Connectivity

The AlphaSmart allows you to transfer text to and from your Macintosh in a variety of ways. ADB, USB, and Infrared are supported. Sending data to the Mac through ADB or USB couldn't be simpler: plug a cable into your Mac's keyboard, the other end into the AlphaSmart, and hit the "Send" button on the AlphaSmart. Your text goes to the active window on your Mac.

While the AlphaSmart is connected to your computer, its keyboard works as a normal Mac keyboard, so you can't type on your AlphaSmart while it's connected to a Mac. Cables are not included, but AlphaSmart will sell you a standard (and thankfully long…why does Apple think we all keep our keyboards within three feet of our Macs?) USB cable for $10, or a "Mac Y cable" for the same price, if you want to use ADB. Since one end of the Y cable is USB and the other is ADB, you probably won't find a generic version of that cable anywhere, so you'll have to buy it from AlphaSmart. The ADB connection worked perfectly every time.

The USB connection, however, frequently cut off the beginning of files that I was sending. When I repeated the send, it always worked fine…it turns out that the problem is that you can't hit Send instantly after plugging the AlphaSmart into your Mac: the USB connection isn't instantaneous like the ADB is, so if you hit send too quickly, your Mac won't get the beginning of the data the AlphaSmart sends it. Waiting a few seconds before sending is the workaround. My guess is that this isn't a problem that AlphaSmart can fix, but it would be nice to have it noted in the manual. (The Troubleshooting section does mention the problem of some characters not transferring, but doesn't mention this particular cause/workaround.)

Transferring files using Infrared requires extra software to be installed and running during the transfer. If your Mac has built-in IR, you can use that for the transfer, or you can use an IR pod, which attaches to a Mac through a serial port. One IR pod is included with the IR version of the AlphaSmart. Even though my PowerBook has built-in IR, I found I preferred to use the IR pod, since that way, I didn't need to turn my PB around to make a transfer.

If you want to be able to transfer files from your Mac to the AlphaSmart, you'll have to put up an additional $19 for the GetUtility. It's simple enough to use, and worked fine with ADB, USB, and IR connections. You copy the text you want to transfer into the clipboard, run the GetUtility, and hit the Send to AlphaSmart button. The only problem I had was sending a large file: the AlphaSmart can only hold so much in a single file, so the end of the file gets cut off. You are not informed that this happened, nor are you given an option to put the rest of the file you're sending into a different AlphaSmart file; the data is simply lost.

Always Room for Improvement

For the price, the AlphaSmart is a great value, and many of the improvements I could suggest here are simply incompatible with the idea of an inexpensive, simple to use, text-only product. That said, I would like to share a few ideas of ways the AlphaSmart could be improved.

As mentioned above, the AlphaSmart can hold eight files, each of about ten pages. That's fine as long as your files are relatively short. However, it means that if you'd like to have a fifteen page document, you have to split it up across two files. But the memory is there: why can't the AlphaSmart allot as much space as is necessary to one file, albeit at the cost of another? It's unfortunate that the total amount of memory in the AlphaSmart can't be distributed across the files as needed.

I also wish the angle of the display were adjustable. In the AlphaSmart 3000, it is fixed at a slight angle. It's fine if you're holding the AlphaSmart on your lap, or if it's on a desk in front of you, but if its closer to eye-level, it becomes hard to read the screen. Perhaps more of an issue, the fixed angle increases the thickest-point thickness of the AlphaSmart to nearly two inches. If it were possible to flatten out the screen when traveling with the AlphaSmart, its thickness could be reduced to about an inch and a quarter.

Finally, I frequently found myself using the Find command to locate a particular file, since they aren't named, and are only identified by a number. An Index function, displaying the first line of each file in a menu, would be very helpful. I'd like to hit one button to get a menu, arrow-key to the file I want, and hit enter; that would be a good deal faster than using Find. It would also allow one to quickly find an empty File: I often had to go through opening several files looking for an empty one in which I could start a new document.

Conclusion

Overall, I am very impressed by the AlphaSmart: it's thoughtfully designed, easy to use, and a wonderful companion for my Macintosh. The manual is complete and easy to follow, and with the excellent loaner program, it almost seems crazy not to give an AlphaSmart a trial run. The only significant problem I had with it was in printing to older printers, the DeskWriter and StyleWriter. Since modern Mac users now have USB rather than serial printers, the inability to connect the AlphaSmart to a USB printer may also be significant for some. While no product is perfect, I do feel that printing needs some improvement, and I therefore give the AlphaSmart 3000IR a rating of Very Nice.

By Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com

AppleWorks 6

Company: Apple Computer, Inc.
Web: http://www.apple.com/appleworks/
Street Price: $68, no upgrades
Requirements: Power Mac with Mac OS 8.1 or higher, 24 MB of RAM.

AppleWorks 6 is the long-awaited revision of the integrated suite formerly known as ClarisWorks. The new name still elicits happy memories from my Apple II computing days, when AppleWorks was the only productivity software one needed. Although early versions of BeagleWorks and Symantec's GreatWorks put ClarisWorks to shame, Claris persevered until version 4 became the clear champion of the integrated productivity suites. Soon after, it was the only one left standing. ClarisWorks was always popular in education, and with version 5 Claris introduced a Word 5–like button bar to help the product gain acceptance with small businesses. ("It's all the office you need.") Sadly, this was one of only a few minor changes between versions 4 and 5. It was not the upgrade most hoped for.

Apple soon resorbed Claris, jettisoning all its products except FileMaker Pro, HomePage, and ClarisWorks. FileMaker and HomePage were spun off as FileMaker, Inc., and as Apple rightly recognized that ClarisWorks was an essential product for the consumer and education markets that its new i-products were targeting, it took ClarisWorks for itself and renamed it AppleWorks.

Most people took this as a good sign. Although Apple ignored great products such as Claris Emailer and HyperCard, it seemed to recognize the importance of AppleWorks and understand its appeal. Not only is it now bundled with new iMacs and iBooks, but Apple also holds it up to developers as a sign that they are eating their own dog food. AppleWorks 6 is the first major Mac application to be carbonized for Mac OS X. It's also the most significant update to the product since ClarisWorks 4, featuring tables (at last), a presentation module, and a new interface. All of this sounds great, but the truth of the matter is that AppleWorks 6

is a mixed bag. The improvements are welcome and nicely done, but the usability of the program has regressed to the point where I feel that version 6 is actually a downgrade. That's the short version of the review; read on to find out what Apple did right, what it did wrong, and whether you should buy.

The New Look

The first thing you'll notice about AppleWorks 6 is its new look. As with Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5[1], AppleWorks 6 has a new look that kinda, sorta looks like Mac OS X's Aqua. And, like IE 5, the new look does nothing to improve usability and has some significant drawbacks, not least of which is that the new parts look nothing like a standard Macintosh application. This is particularly unfortunate for AppleWorks, as it comes from Apple. If Apple won't follow its own guidelines, it sets a poor example for other developers. Who has to put up with the trendy non-standard interfaces? We do, of course.

The Button Bar

Thankfully, with AppleWorks 6, the interface changes are mostly relegated to the floating palettes and the button bar, which now features Office 98–style rollover buttons that don't look like buttons[2]. The button bar has prettier icons than before, but it ends up being less useful. It also no longer supports multiple sets of buttons, which is bound to disappoint some users, although I'm not among them.

In AppleWorks 5, the button bar could display popup menus that showed the font, size, and style of the current text. You could also adjust these properties from the popup menus.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/ie5.shtml
2. http://www.atpm.com/4.06/page8.shtml

With AppleWorks 6, there's no easy way to inspect the attributes of the current text. You can add Font, Size, and Style buttons to the button bar to help apply these attributes, but using them is clumsy. If you click and hold the mouse on the button (instead of clicking and releasing—the Windows way), there is a long delay before the menu pops up. And if you don't keep the cursor completely still during this delay, AppleWorks thinks you want to **edit** the button bar and starts dragging a translucent graphic of the button-menu you're trying to press.
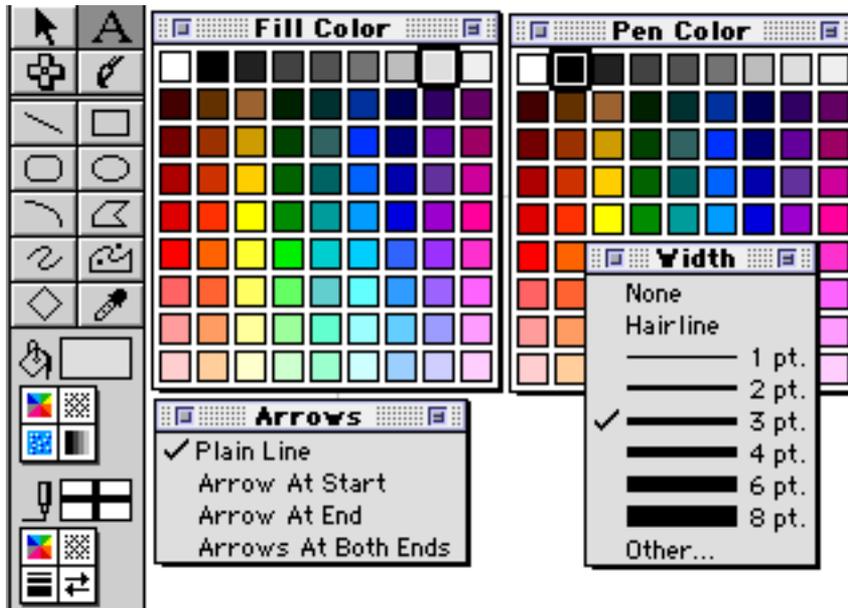
The second think you'll notice about the button bar is that it's huge. The screen shot above is the version with **small** buttons. Even so, it's displaying one fewer button than the smaller screenshot of the AppleWorks 5 button bar, and that's not counting the latter's five popup menus and help text area.

Tools and Accents

This trend continues throughout AppleWorks 6. While previous versions of AppleWorks made excellent use of screen real estate, Apple says that AppleWorks 6 gives you, and I quote, "more flexibility in managing the 'real estate' in the document window." (from the AppleWorks 6 online help). Translation: AppleWorks 6 uses a lot more pixels but lets you control exactly which pixels are wasted by moving floating windows around the screen.

The visual bloat comes at you from two directions. First, all the floating windows are much larger than before, even though most of them don't display any additional information. Second, AppleWorks 6 forces you to rely on floating windows where you didn't have to in previous versions. For example, in AppleWorks 5 each document had a tools palette at the left edge of its window. The top four tools were for selecting and moving objects and creating frames, and the other tools were context sensitive, i.e. drawing tools or painting tools, depending on which type of frame you were editing. Below those tools were eight popup menus that were used for setting fill colors and patterns, as well as line styles. You could tear off frequently used popup menus to form palettes. In this way, the tools took up exactly as much space as you wanted, and you could display as many palettes (torn-off menus) at a
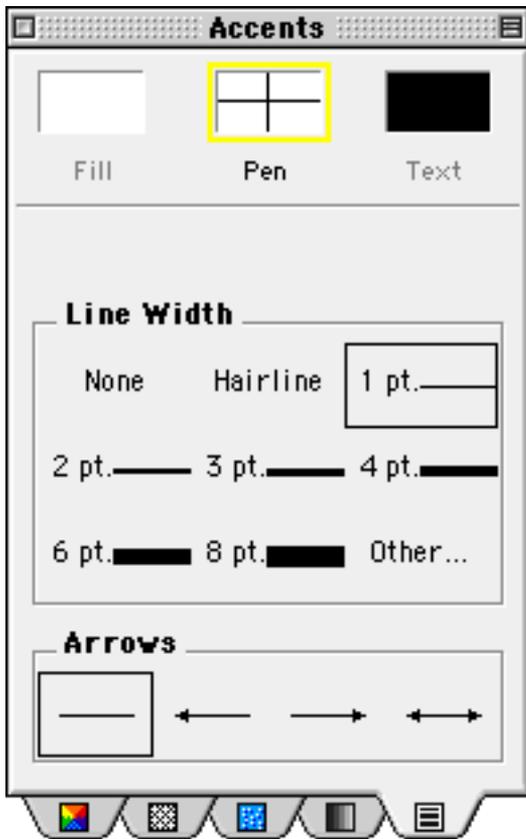
time as you wanted. It was easy to hide the tools section at the left edge of the window and to show it again when you were ready to do some drawing.

With AppleWorks 6, all of these options are gone, and the tools section has become a floating palette. One of its tabs contains the tools for creating frames, and the other (as shown below) contains the drawing and painting tools. Note that since I'm not in a painting or table frame, the bottom ten tools are unavailable.

The new tools palette takes up a lot more space than the old tools bar, but what's even worse is that it always gets in the way. The old tools bar was part of the window. When you showed it the window's contents slid over the right, and when you hid it they slid back over to the left. The tools palette, on the other hand, is a floating window. When you show it, it appears on the left edge of your screen, covering the leftmost inch of your document. You move the window an inch to the right so that you can see both at once. (If you have the tools bar docked, you can skip this step.) When you then hide the tools palette, it disappears, leaving an inch of wasted space along the left edge of your monitor; so, you move or resize your document window to take advantage of this space.

Guess what happens when you want to show the tools palette again?

The painting, fill, line, and gradient options have been moved from popup menus in the document window to a separate Accents palette. Unlike the tools palette, the Accents palette cannot be docked. Each set of options is on its own tab, which means that you can't see more than one at once. And since you have to switch tabs to set different options, it's no more efficient than clicking on the popup menus in AppleWorks 5—except that now you have this huge palette filling up your screen. Also annoying is AppleWorks' tendency to automatically show the Accents palette when you create certain kinds of documents.
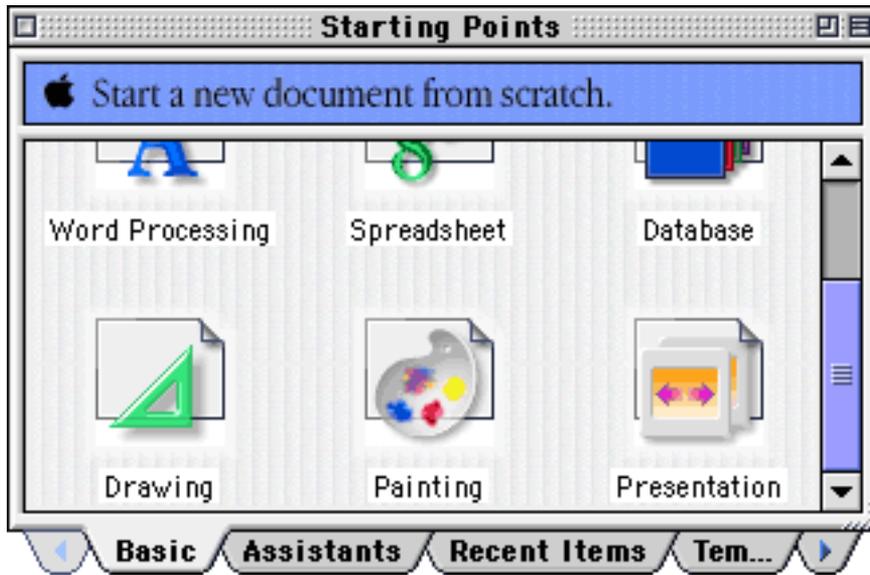
The way accents work has also changed. In AppleWorks 5, the popup menus and palettes would always display the attributes of the currently selected object. If no object was selected, they displayed the default attributes that would be used for the next object you created. In AppleWorks 6, the Accents palette always displays the default attributes. I don't see any benefit to this approach, and it's potentially confusing.
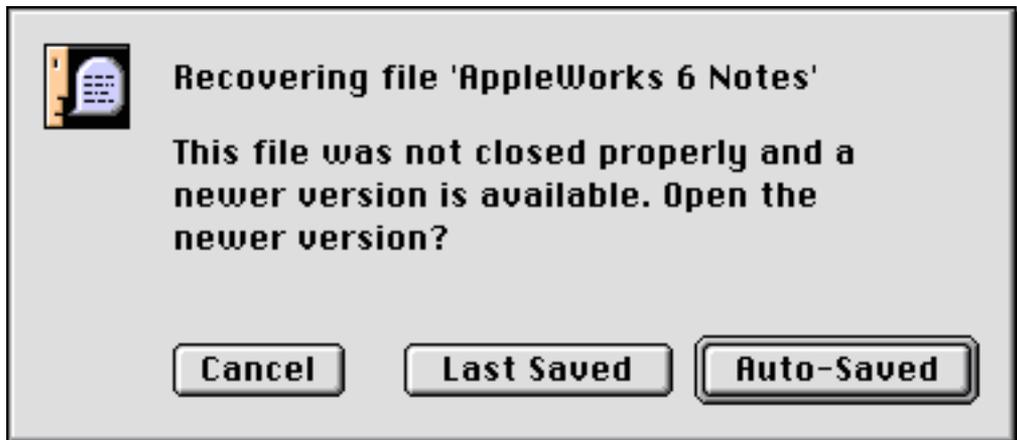
Starting Points and Auto-Save

Apple did do a few smart things when they redesigned the interface. Starting Points and Auto-Save are two new features that work quite well. AppleWorks displays the optional Starting Points window when you start the program and whenever there are no open documents. It provides easy access to new documents, PrintShop-inspired assistants, Recent

Items, and Templates. The only problems I found with Starting Points are that it feels slug-gish (even on a Sawtooth G4) and that the window often gets mispositioned.

Auto-Save is a new feature that, when activated, causes AppleWorks to periodically save all open documents. It never overwrites your files, instead auto-saving into a special folder for emergency recoveries. If your Mac crashes with an open document, the next time you start up, AppleWorks will ask whether you want to recover the from the auto-saved version.

This turned out to be very useful feature. While writing this review, I tried several times to take AppleWorks' bundled equation editor (MathType) for a spin. My Mac crashed hard every single time, but I never lost any data.

Modules and Frames

AppleWorks is comprised of six core modules: word processing, spreadsheet, database, drawing, painting, and presentation. You can, of course, create documents of any of these types, and AppleWorks is quite a lean program considering that it does all these things. But its real strength lies in integration. Any of the six document types can contain "frames" belonging to the other modules. For instance, a word processing document can have an embedded spreadsheet frame, and a database can have embedded painting frames. A word processing document can contain text frames, which at first seems unusual, but ends up being an incredibly easy way to create documents with multiple (possibly linked) text flows. Any kind of document can be a frame, except databases and presentations (which don't really make sense as frames). And, in addition, any kind of document can contain table frames (although there is no separate table document type).

Nice features are present in all of the main document editors. Slide Show, a carry over from before there was a presentation module, lets you do presentations with any kind of document. Views let you open the same document in multiple windows, each of which could be set a to a different zoom level. Links lets you create clickable links to other documents, or other parts of the same document. There's also a scripts menu that you can customize with your own AppleScripts. A few useful scripts are bundled, including one for mounting iDisks.

Word Processor

The word processor is the most important AppleWorks module, and it's also the best. It's powerful enough for almost anyone's needs, with support for [the usual formatting features](3), as well as [paragraph and character styles with inheritance](4), [outlines](5), tables, sections, and footnotes. Of course, there's also an integrated spelling checker and thesaurus. In fact, it's probably more likely that you'll find the AppleWorks word processor inadequate because it can't read Microsoft Word files than because it lacks the word processing features you need.

What is the AppleWorks word processor missing? Mostly long-document tools. It has no table of contents or indexing features and no support for cross references. Automatic numbering is only available in the outliner—you can't create custom numbering for headings, figures, or tables. You can create inline and floating graphics, but there's no way to link float-

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3. http://www.atpm.com/5.06/paradigm.shtml
4. http://www.atpm.com/5.07/paradigm.shtml
5. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/paradigm.shtml

ing graphics to particular paragraphs. Invisible text is not supported. There's no way to keep certain paragraphs on the same side of a page break, or to control widows and orphans. The equation editor is a separate application, making AppleWorks unsuitable for serious scientific work. Finally, the Find and Replace feature only supports text; you can't search for styles, graphics, or footnotes.

The missing feature that stands out most, however, is that the word processor no longer contains Font, Size, and Style menus. These commonly accessed commands are now hidden behind sub-menus in the Text menu, while the less frequently used Outline and Table commands each get their own menu. This is perhaps the most bizarre contradiction in AppleWorks' design. Nearly everywhere else the product seems like it was designed for 21-inch monitors, yet the most important part of the interface, the menu bar, actually takes up less space than before.
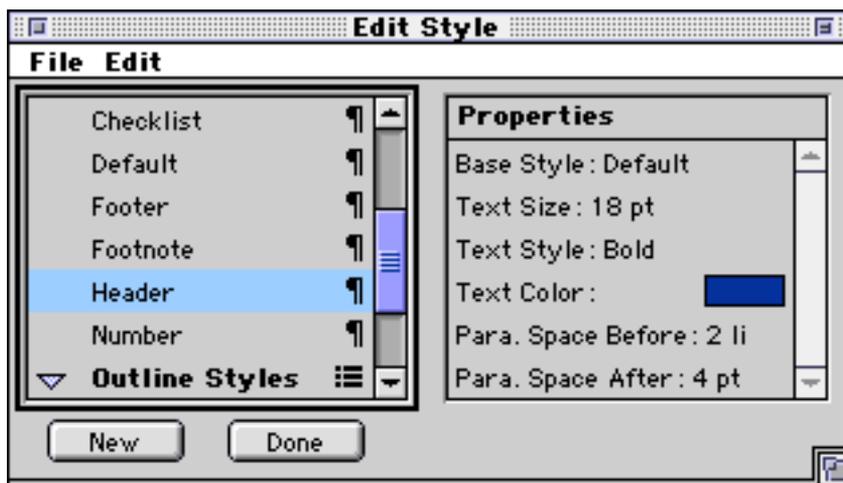
The stand-out feature is tables. Before AppleWorks 6, the only way to create tables was to embed a spreadsheet frame in your word processing document. Now, AppleWorks has a real table editor, and it's one of the best I've seen. The only major flaw is that tables cannot span pages.

You create a table by specifying its dimensions in a dialog box or by converting the selected text. Once you have a table, you can subdivide and merge cells using the menu commands, or add new cells by drawing the divider lines, much like in Word 98. The normal AppleWorks tools for colors and lines let you change the look of your table by changing divider widths and adding cell shading. Support for table style sheets can save you a lot of time with this, but the feature turns out to be disappointing. Table style sheets let you quickly apply a preset formatting to your table, but the style and the table are not linked; changing a table style does not affect tables already created with that style.

Finally, since table are full-fledged frames, you can position them as draw objects in your word processing document, and include them in documents from the other modules. Beware, though: in a painting document, tables become uneditable bitmaps.

AppleWorks makes creating documents with columns a breeze. Since it supports sections, each part of your document can have a different number of columns and different page numbering. This, combined with the strong support for text frames containing independent text flows, makes it an easy and inexpensive alternative to PageMaker for creating simple newsletters.

As I mentioned above, AppleWorks has some powerful style sheet features, including inheritance and compound styles. Unfortunately, AppleWorks 6 takes a styles feature that was easy to use (but not perfect) and makes it awkward to the point where it discourages the use of styles. In AppleWorks 5, styles were applied and edited from the Styles palette, shown below. To edit a style, you selected its name in the left pane, and then used the normal formatting interface to adjust the style's properties, shown at the right. When not editing styles, the palette was half the width shown below, consisting simply of a list of styles that you could apply by single-clicking with the mouse.

AppleWorks 6 changes the Styles palette to the one shown below. It does not get any shorter than in the screenshot, and there's no way to hide the preview. At its narrowest, it is about twice as wide as the AppleWorks 5 palette, and because of the outline structure you'll need to make it even wider to see the style properties that you're editing. Overall, the new palette is clumsier to use. When editing styles, I spend a lot of time collapsing and expanding the disclosure triangles. When applying styles, I'm bothered by the odd list selection behavior; in

AppleWorks 5 you could click anywhere in the style list to select a style, but in AppleWorks 6 you must click directly on a word, and not in the white space next to one.

Applying styles didn't work quite the way I expected. At first, it seems that double-clicking on a style name is the same as clicking the Apply button. But in fact, these behave differently. There's still no way to apply styles from the menu bar, or even to assign shortcut keys to them.

Finally, there are two deficiencies to the design of AppleWorks' styles. First, there's no way to make the style of the next paragraph part of a style: pressing Return with the insertion point on a heading paragraph creates another heading instead of switching to Body style. Second, styles are not smart about combining vertical space. Say you specify that headings should be preceded by 24 points of white space and body paragraphs should be followed by 12 points

of white space. Then if you have a body paragraph followed by a heading, there will actually be 36 points of space in between, instead of the 24 that you probably wanted.

Spreadsheet

There's not much to say about the AppleWorks spreadsheet. It works, it hasn't changed much from previous versions, and it's adequate only for basic tasks. It still uses a different syntax for cell formulas than Microsoft Excel, using two periods instead of a colon to specify ranges of cells. It has no support for sheets. Charts are still very limited, and more difficult to create than in Excel. If you're not happy with the AppleWorks spreadsheet, I recommend Mariner from Mariner Software[6]. It's more powerful than AppleWorks and more efficient to use. If that's still not enough, there's always Excel.

Database

The database module has also changed little since previous versions. It works very much like a "Lite" version of FileMaker Pro and lacks advanced features such as FileMaker's script editor. Oddly, you can no longer hide the record browsing controls at the left edge of the window. The biggest problem with the database is still that there is still an obscenely low limit on the amount of text you can have in each field.

Painting

The painting module works fine, but does nothing to distinguish itself. I suppose the best part about it is that you can embed painting frames inside other AppleWorks documents. Aside from this, you're probably better off with a shareware painting program like GraphicConverter[7] or a low-end commercial one such as Color It![8].

Drawing

Like the painting module, the drawing module provides a good set of tools that isn't particularly special. They're easy to use and work great inside the word processor. The standard shape drawing tools are there, including tools for freehand drawing and editable Bezier curves. But if you're serious about drawing you will need more powerful tools. The most glaring omission is that AppleWorks doesn't interactively snap shapes you're drawing to log-

6. http://www.marinersoft.com/software.html
7. http://www.atpm.com/5.02/page12.shtml
8. http://www.microfrontier.com

ical join points and angles relative to other shapes. This kind of assistance is essential and has been present for years in tools such as Illustrator.

Presentation

AppleWorks 6 now has a presentations module instead of a communications module. Though the presentations module feels a little rough around the edges, it was definitely a good trade. The module is easy to use, but not powerful. It's certainly not at the level of PowerPoint as of yet, or even MORE. At the heart of the presentations module is the Controls palette. The first tab at the bottom of it (with the star) lets you create master slides. When you create a slide from a master slide, it inherits the layout of the master slide, thus saving you time and helping to make your slides look consistent. But master slides are more like stationery pads than the master pages you may be familiar with from page layout programs. If you modify a master slide, slides you've created from it do not update to reflect the changes.

The second tab is for creating, deleting, and arranging slides. It simply shows a scrolling list of slide thumbnails, which you can rearrange by dragging. Slides can contain all the normal frames. There's also a special text frame on each slide for speaker's notes, which you can see in edit mode, but which is not displayed in present mode. At the bottom of the Controls palette you can set the transition effect for a slide and choose whether it will be printed or displayed (or both or neither). The third tab is for grouping slides into folders, and the fourth lets you set some options for your presentation and contains the button for actually starting it.

The limitations of the presentations module become apparent quickly. Unlike PowerPoint, there's no way to view a matrix of slide thumbnails. You're stuck with the scrolling list, which quickly becomes unwieldy when you have a lot of slides. For the record, MORE let you create slides from outlines in the late '80s, a feature that has now become standard in all presentation software—except for AppleWorks. Another feature that's missing is "Builds," which

lets you hide parts of slides at the beginning, then show more points as you discuss them during your presentation. Finally, AppleWorks only supports animation using QuickTime. So much of the flashy stuff you see people do with PowerPoint and Director is difficult, if not impossible, in AppleWorks.
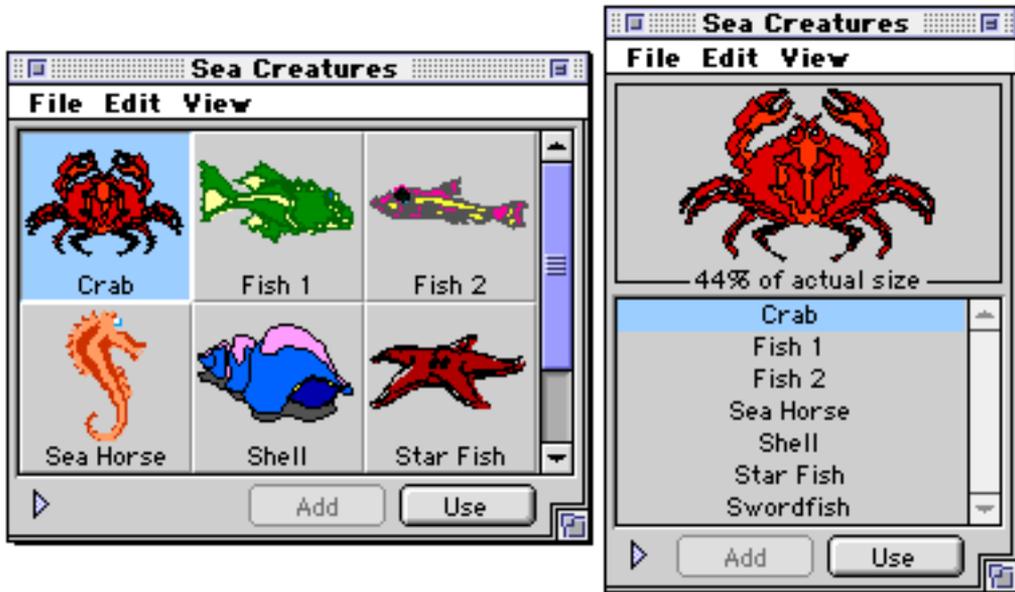
Internet Integration

The Clippings feature is an extension of the Library feature that appeared in previous versions of AppleWorks. As before, you can browse clip art from a variety of categories and incorporate it into your document. You can also search based on keywords associated with the images. But now, searches not only look on your hard disk, but also on Internet servers provided for Apple by Akamai.

Buying AppleWorks grants you access to Apple's library of 25,000 clip-art images, and AppleWorks 6 can transparently download them for you. There's no need to fire up a Web browser or worry about encoding or decompression. It all happens right inside AppleWorks. You can configure a disk cache so that AppleWorks remembers the last bunch of images; you don't have to download them anew for each session. Curiously, the AppleWorks CD has several hundred megabytes of free space that could have been filled with a portion of the 25,000 images, saving you lots of download time.
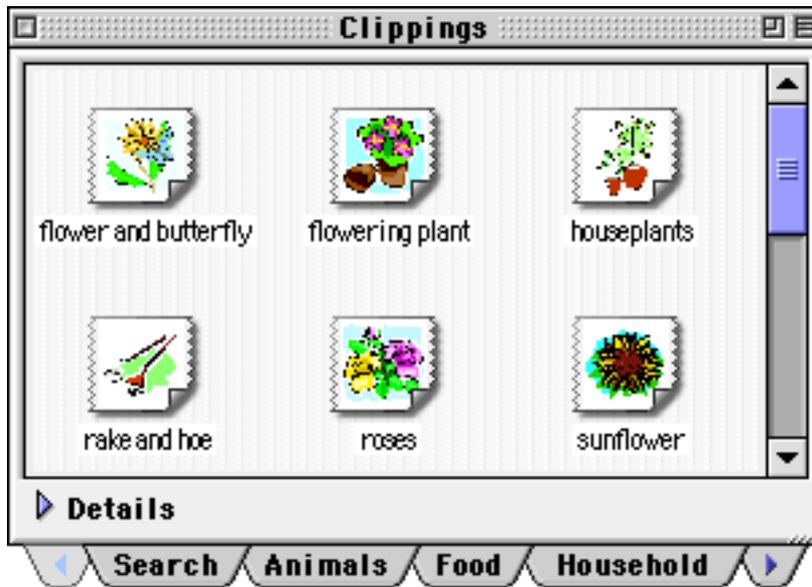
The clip art still isn't very good; and, aside from the Internet integration, Clippings isn't really any better than the AppleWorks 5 Library feature. In fact, it's worse. Library was fast, but Clippings are slow (even the ones stored locally on your hard disk). Library let you view

by thumbnail or by list (see below). Neither view was particularly attractive, but they were both efficient in practice.

You can only view Clippings by thumbnail, and the thumbnails are at the same time too large and too small. The smallest of the three sizes (shown below) has small indistinct thumbnails separated by lots of dead space. Notice how much larger the window is than in AppleWorks 5, and how you actually see less information. Larger thumbnails display better previews, but they **really** consume screen space.

The other problem is that the only way to view different categories of Clippings is to use the tabs at the bottom of the window. A fresh install of AppleWorks contains 16 Clippings tabs, and you'll probably want to add more to categorize images you download from the Internet. But because only some of the tabs can be displayed at once, you have to scroll them using the tabs with side-pointing triangle icons. This is extremely awkward, and makes it difficult to move clippings from one tab to another. Worst of all, AppleWorks 5 solved this problem rather well: each category had its own menu item, and you could have windows for more than one category open at a time. Also depressing is that, contrary to Apple's own guidelines, the only way to access the Clippings options is through a contextual menu.

Macintosh Technology Adoption

Aside from the non-standard button bars and palettes, AppleWorks 6 does make some strides toward a more standard Macintosh interface. It uses more standard Appearance Manager controls, and the open and save dialog boxes now use Navigation Services.

But, as with the rest of AppleWorks, Macintosh technology adoption is a mixed bag. Despite the modernized interface, it still does not support live scrolling or multiple levels of undo; window zooming still doesn't work properly; the document and author information that used to be called Document Info is now called Properties, as on Windows; and Stationery pads are called Templates. Recordable macros in AppleWorks are still completely separate from AppleScript. You can record macros, but can't edit them; and you can edit AppleScripts, but can't record them.

Help and Documentation

AppleWorks no longer comes with a printed user manual, or even an online one in PDF format. Instead, it has an installation guide and online Apple Help. This prompted the folks at the Pogue Press to write a <u>"Missing Manual" for AppleWorks 6</u>[9].

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9. http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/aplwrksmm/

The Apple Help is decent, but it's not as nice as the QuickHelp that shipped with previous versions of AppleWorks, or as thorough. Balloon help is well-used, but it's buggy. Tooltips appear even after you've turned them off, and they often flicker or display the wrong balloon for the item you're pointing at.

Conclusion

AppleWorks 6 would have been a great product if Apple had paid more attention to the details. For consumer products, usability matters more than filling out a feature checklist, and Apple clearly released AppleWorks 6 before it was properly fine-tuned. The product is full of little bugs and features that don't quite work right, and there are a couple guaranteed ways to crash it. On my G4, the speed is acceptable, but it's nowhere near as peppy as version 5. Starting Points and Clippings are slow, and there are lengthy delays when copying or pasting large amounts of text, or saving medium- to large-sized documents.

Aside from introducing the table editor and presentation module, AppleWorks 6 fixes a lot of minor problems that version 5 had. For instance, you can now set text colors when the button bar is hidden, and the HTML export options are available from a menu command instead of an obscure button bar button.

There is also a surprising omission. AppleWorks 6 is no longer bundled with DataViz's MacLink translators, so you can neither import from nor export to other programs' formats, including "universal" ones like RTF. What was once a former strength of AppleWorks has become a glaring weakness.

If you already own AppleWorks, you don't necessarily want to upgrade. The most attractive new features are Carbon support, tables, and the presentation module. But these alone may not justify the cost of upgrading, especially since there is no special upgrade pricing. Of course, if you don't have a PowerPC-based Mac, you can't upgrade at all. AppleWorks, long known for running—and running well—on just about every Mac, now requires a PowerPC. On slower Power Macs, it has trouble keeping up with your typing.

If you don't already own AppleWorks, you should think carefully about what you want and need before buying. The word processor is quite good, but for most users I think Mariner Write[10] may be the better choice. It handles the basics better than AppleWorks, and users

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10. http://www.atpm.com/5.01/page9.shtml

who need more power would be better off using a product more geared toward long documents, such as Word, Word Perfect (which is now free), FrameMaker, or Nisus Writer. As described above, there are superior low-end alternatives for graphics and spreadsheets, as well. In fact, the presentations module also has a good alternative—the [now-free MORE](http://www.outliners.com)[11]. Of course, part of the charm of AppleWorks is that it integrates the different modules so well, and this may sway you to choose AppleWorks as an integrated package, over a collection of disparate applications that work well in isolation.

AppleWorks 6 receives a Good rating—three out of five—because of the strong feature set and good design that it inherits from ClarisWorks 4 and 5. The new table editor is nice, the presentation module is adequate for its first version, and there are some nice new features for novices, but most of the other changes are for the worse. AppleWorks is probably Apple's most strategic software product outside the operating system itself. For the majority of users, it's far more important than iMovie will ever be. Unfortunately, the latest version does little to inspire confidence in Apple's software efforts. Nay, it inspires fear—fear that good Mac software is becoming even harder to find, fear that Apple has no clue why AppleWorks was so popular in the first place, and fear that Apple really truly believes that style is more important than good software design. The product is still good, but the trend is not.

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11. http://www.outliners.com

ATPM RATINGS

VERY NICE

BY DAVID OZAB, DOZAB@ATPM.COM

Handspring Modem Module

Company: Handspring
Web: http://www.handspring.com
Price: $129 (plus shipping)
Requirements: Handspring Visor or Visor Deluxe PDA, plus HotSync Software and a desktop modem connection for remote HotSync.

Background

In December, Eric Blair reviewed Handspring's relatively new Visor Deluxe[1]. To me, what set this Palm clone apart from the originals was not price or USB synchronization, but the Springboard expansion module slot. Here was a device that promised unlimited expandability. One minute it's a game, the next a GPS or an MP3 player, a cell phone or a wireless PDA. The particular module that caught my attention, though, was the Handspring Modem; sadly it wasn't shipping at the time, so I held off on my purchase.

Then, in early March, Handspring announced the long-awaited release of the Handspring Modem, a 33Kbps Hayes-compatible Springboard module that measures a mere 3" x 2" x 0.5". I went to Handspring's Web page and ordered a Visor ($179, with 2 MB of RAM and a USB cradle) and a Handspring Modem. They both arrived exactly two weeks later.

1. http://www.atpm.com/5.12/visor.shtml

Installation

The Springboard slot makes installation easy. First, place batteries in the module, then simply remove the cover and slide the modem into the slot. Connect the included phone cord to any available socket, and you're done. The entire operation can be performed with the Visor switched on. The module adds about 60% to the weight of the Visor, which is still quite light, and makes it a little top heavy. Resting the Visor evenly on your palm, however, prevents it from tipping.

The next step is to make a connection. This is, sadly, where the instructions fall somewhat short. The steps provided are intended to walk the user through "HotSyncing" through the modem port of your desktop. If, however, you have a DSL connection like me, you're apparently out in the cold. A little poking around on my Visor revealed a lot, though. I quickly stumbled across the Network preferences window, which allowed me to set my ISP, login name, password, and access number. I then tapped the connect button, and I was online.

HotSync

One of the big advantages of the Visor is the standard USB HotSync Cradle, allowing users to connect to iMacs, G3s, G4s, and PowerBooks without optional attachments. But what if you want to HotSync to a computer from another room, or city, or country? As long as you have access to a powered-on computer with a free modem line, you can use the Modem Module to update your Palm Desktop software from anywhere in the world. A HotSync button on the front of the modem, located conveniently under your thumb if you're right-handed, provides the same one-touch access as the HotSync button on the USB cradle. I was unable to try this out on my own system, but given the small amount of data transmitted, I would imagine that the synchronization time wouldn't be too much longer than that with a USB connection.

Internet Access

My reason for buying the Modem Module, though, is Internet access. I won't be in the market for a laptop for a while, but I'd like to keep up with my email and stay in touch with friends and colleagues while on the road. Handspring clearly states that they include no

Internet software with the Visor, but these applications are available for download on the Net. So within an hour, following some preliminary research while awaiting my order, I had downloaded and installed a Web browser (ProxiWeb), a email program (ProxiMail), ICQ, and Yahoo Messenger, all for free. But what to do with the modem's HotSync button? It's too convenient to ignore. Well, thanks to the flexibility of the Palm OS, I remapped it to launch ICQ instead.

Plan Ahead and Buy Batteries

After spending a few days with my Visor and Handspring Modem, both sets of batteries ran out. Admittedly, I had been using the modem a lot in order to gather information for my review. A friend of mine who purchased a Visor at the same time that I did, though, was running his Visor about as much as I was, only without the modem. In the same period of time, he had only used about a quarter of his first set of batteries. I can only assume that the modem drains both its own batteries and the Visor's as well.

Conclusion

I didn't expect a lot from the Handspring Modem, just easy installation and reliable performance. Despite vague instructions, that's exactly what I got and I'm very happy. The price is certainly steep for a 33Kbps modem, but that may change when competing 56Kbps modem and Ethernet modules are released later this year. If Internet access isn't in your immediate plans, you might want to wait; but if, like me, you'd consider your Visor incomplete without it, the Handspring Modem has the advantage of being available now.

One final request: I am curious to hear how the modem HotSync performs. Therefore, I ask any of you who plan to purchase a Handspring Modem for this purpose to write me about your experiences. I'll include some of them in a future update.

BY DANIEL CHVATIK, DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM

MP3 Player Roundup—Part III

This third part of the MP3 roundup concludes the series—for now, at least. It is quite likely that there will be a follow-up some time in the future, given the still-explosive activity in MP3 software. Right now, I'll take a look at some more interesting MP3 programs currently available, and give you a list of those that didn't make it into the roundups. At the end are my conclusions about which programs to choose. Also, take a look at our Update section for an update on Macster.

beHere 1.0

Company: Everyday Software
Web: http://www.public.iastate.edu/%7Ecosy/
Price: free
Requirements: Power Mac with Mac OS 8.5 or above, 1 MB available RAM, Audion or SoundJam MP.

beHere doesn't do much—and that's a good thing. It's designed as a front-end to both Audion and SoundJam. What that means is that it lets you control Audion or SoundJam from the beHere application. What's the deal? beHere is just a small floating window that contains the most common commands. Due to its floating nature, it's always in front of all other windows. That allows you to control Audion while you are working in Photoshop or some other program simply by clicking on the small buttons in beHere's window. No need to switch applications.

The buttons available are back, stop, play, pause, next, new playlist, open file, open URL, and equalizer (in SoundJam) or CD mode (in Audion). If you control-click on the beHere window, the contextual menu allows you to switch to your MP3 player or quit it. That's all

beHere does, but it does it efficiently, cleanly, and for free. It's very useful for those of us with small screens and lots of open applications. Oh, and it supports skins, too.
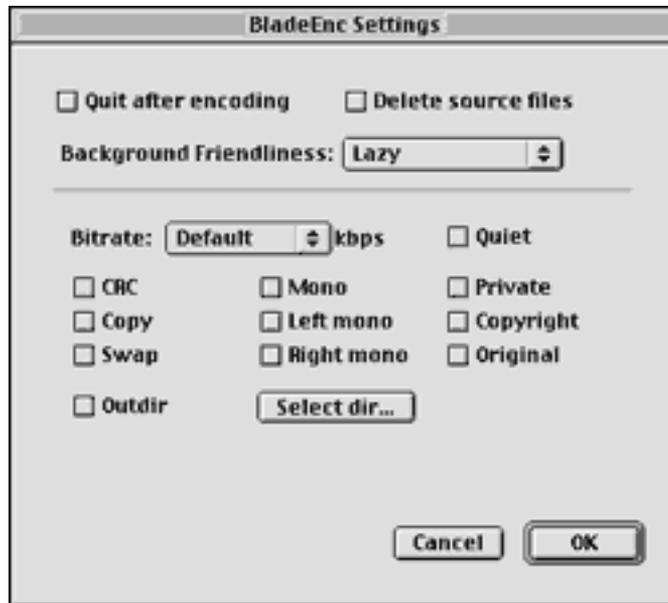
BladeEnc 1.2

Author: Petteri Kamppuri
Web: http://www.helsinki.fi/%7Epkamppur/bladeencmac.html
Price: free
Requirements: Power Mac with System 7.5.3 or later, 1.7 MB of free RAM.

Sometimes we are envious of the nice tools available on other computing platforms—until a benevolent soul decides to port them to Macintosh. This is exactly what Petteri Kamppuri did. He ported the famous BladeEnc MP3 encoder to the Mac. As with most ports, you have to put up with a somewhat crude interface, but at least the important parts have been Macified, so you can enjoy the encoder without resorting to command line interfaces and configuration files.

As you can see from the preferences dialog, it supports most options that you would want, including bit rates from 32 to 320 Kbps (but no variable bit rates). As a bonus, the source code is freely available. BladeEnc takes WAV, AIFF or RAW sound files as input. If you want to create MP3s from a CD, you will have to use QuickTime first to convert the tracks to AIFF files, and then use BladeEnc to create the desired MP3s. This may be a bit cumbersome, but at least it is free. Go for Proteron's N2MP3 (or a similar commercial encoder like SoundJam)

if you have the money and do lots of MP3 encoding, especially on a G4 (where they take advantage of Velocity Engine acceleration) or on very slow machines (where you don't want to go through AIFF before creating the MP3).

iStream 1.2

Company: Arctic Software
Web: http://www.arcticsw.com/istream/
Price: free for 1–20 listeners; $15 for 30 listeners; $29.99 for 60 listeners.
Requirements: Mac OS 8.1 or above, QuickTime 4
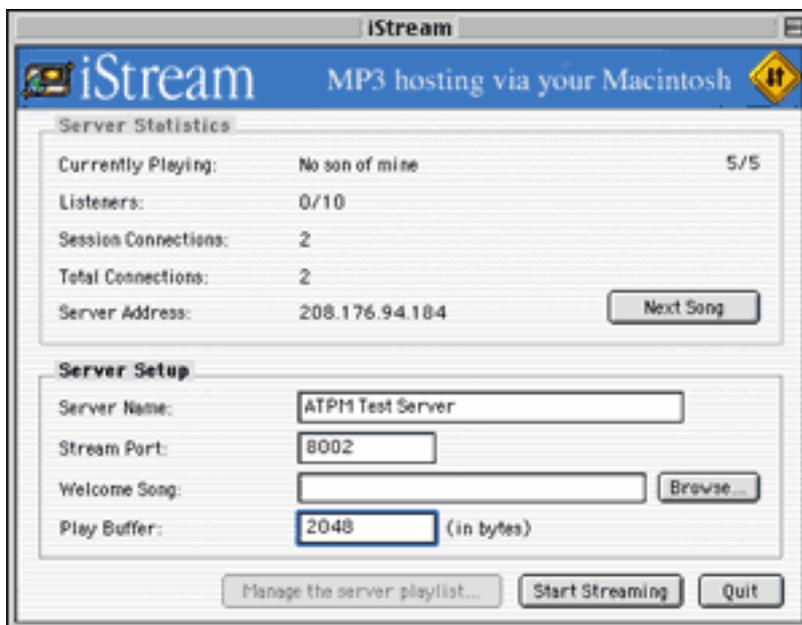
Did you ever feel like the radio stations were all playing trash? Well, now you have a chance to take matters into your own hands and start your own Internet radio station right on your Mac! I have to admit that after reviewing tons of MP3 players in a row, I am glad for something a bit different. Setting up your 'radio station' is fairly easy. Just copy the desired MP3s into the 'Music' folder, start the program, enter the name of your radio station, and hit 'Start Streaming'. It worked pretty well, but was not without problems. I used another computer to listen to my stream, but once I disconnected, I couldn't reconnect.

Also, it is recommended that you downsample your MP3s in order to reduce the bandwidth strain on your server and the listeners. You can specify a welcome MP3 that will be played only once when someone connects. Unfortunately my server didn't show up in the regular

streaming guide listings of Audion or MacAST, so you have to rely on other means of getting an audience. A free version is available for up to 20 listeners. If you want more listeners at once or want to manage your playlist, you will need to register the program. Happy broadcasting!

MacAST Lite 2.1

Company: @soft
Web: http://www.macast.com/lite/
Price: $14.95 (30-day demo available)
Requirements: Power Mac with Mac OS 8.5 or later, at least 1 MB of available RAM.

@soft has been neglecting their MacAST MP3 player quite a bit recently, and has instead devoted its attention to the Lite version. It shows. It is a lot more polished and refined than its big brother. Similar in style and spirit to beHere (see above), but with lots more features, it may be the program of choice for those who want features but an unobtrusive player.

Instead of the usual large playlist, all elements of the program are contained within a small floating "strip" that you can move across the sides of the startup screen (multiple displays are not supported yet), similar to the control strip. They are a bit too serious about it, though, and have even moved the preferences to the strip. I think that this is something that they could have left in the menu. Instead, the menu is barren except for the quit command, a few URLs, the register command and the statistics. The statistics just show you how many songs you have played, for how long, average song length, etc.

MacAST Lite supports roughly the same formats as MacAST, including streaming servers. Of course, there are the obligatory skins, and some are actually quite nice. The strip can be collapsed, just like the control strip, for seamless music enjoyment. The playlist is hierarchical, i.e. it supports subfolders, and has crude support for editing. As we are used to from its big brother, sound quality is very good. At $14.95 it's a little bit cheaper than the beHere/Audion combo, but you don't get a full client. On the other hand, the strip is quite a bit better than beHere's. Try both alternatives and see which you prefer.

MPEG Audio Player 1.74

Author: Oliver Dreer
Web: http://www3.pair.com/odreer/mpeg.html
Price: free
Requirements: Power Mac with virtual memory off.

Ok, at first MPEG Audio Player looks just like every other MP3 player. But it has some nice touches that lift it over the free player with a playlist crowd. For one, it has a very decent, Mac-like interface. It offers limited ID tag information and editing and even a setting for changing the playback speed. Higher speeds make the songs sound much higher, and the reverse is true for slower playback. As such, it is very similar to a pitch control (in fact, many programs implement pitch through playback speed).

Another interesting feature is an oscilloscope output for both channels. This is not really useful, but nevertheless neat, and it can be disabled if you want. One serious shortcoming is the lack of drag and drop in the playlist. For history buffs, the program is from the maker of MP3 Audio Creator (now part of Audio Catalyst).

SoundJam MP Plus/Free 2.0.2
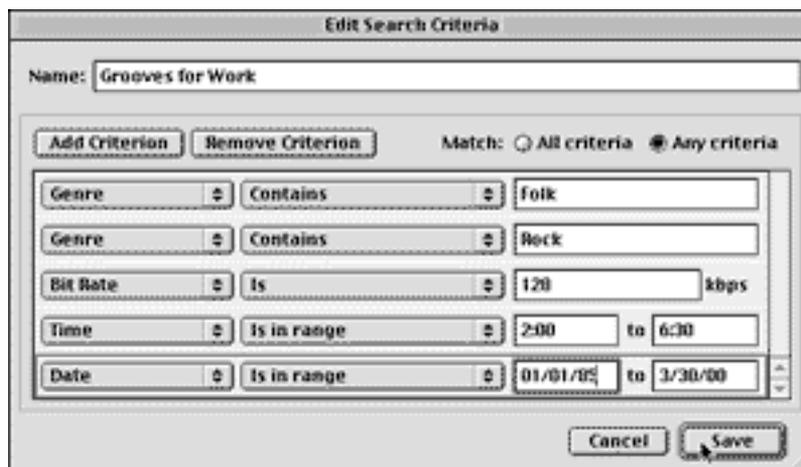
Company: Casady & Greene
Web: http://www.soundjam.com/
Price: Free for free version, $39.95 for Plus version.
Requirements: Power Mac with a 100 MHz 603 or faster, Mac OS 7.6.1 or later.

I just reviewed SoundJam 1.6 two issues ago[1], but it seems that Casady & Greene is trying to keep me busy. It's a good sign that they are still trying hard to make such an excellent program even better; too often companies lose the edge once they get to the top. I covered the basics of the program in the last review, so I will only talk about the changes here. Most likely you won't even notice most of the changes directly. The encoding is faster and of better quality. There are many small under-the-hood changes that make it more convenient and efficient to use. Karaoke is now supported; like in Audion, it fades out vocals from the general music. As with Audion, the success varies depending on the music.

SoundJam has expanded its options for file conversion, now including AIFF, WAV, MOD, QuickTime, NVF, and standard Mac sound files and resources. Also noteworthy is the ability to work directly with the tunes from your Mac's sound input line. This is very convenient if you want to create MP3s from old records or audio cassettes. Also new are customized EQ settings for individual songs, improved ID3 tag support, and a playlist composer. The play list composer lets you automatically create play lists based on your specifications. SoundJam will search your entire hard disk for MP3s to create the playlist you likely want to listen to.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/6.03/mp3players.shtml

Like Audion, SoundJam now has an alarm clock, but it's much more powerful and flexible, and it even lets you invoke AppleScripts. In general, AppleScript support was improved over previous versions. There's also a handy sleep timer that lets you automatically quit the program, or even shut down the computer after a predetermined time interval. Another new feature lets you add entries to the CDDB, an online database that contains information about CDs. This is useful to correct errors in the database or to add CDs that are not generally well known.

Older versions already supported the Rio 500 hardware player. Now the I-Jam and Nomad II have joined the ranks. Users of portable computers will rejoice that songs can now be pre-loaded into memory to help conserve battery life.

For many, one piece of news will probably overshadow all the new features: there are two flavors of SoundJam MP. A Plus version, which contains all the wonderful functions described above, and a 'Free' version which is a bit toned down but—as its name implies—is free. The free version will even give you a 14-day glimpse at the power of the full version, in an attempt to win you over and make you upgrade. The free version is bound to be a great success and will make life hard for many of the other free players out there, which simply do not stack up against SoundJam.

the MP3 Alarm Clock 1.2

Author: Mike Margolis
Web: http://mike.axisproductions.com/clock/
Price: free (author asks to get him at job at Apple though)
Requirements: Power Mac with QuickTime 4

ATPM RATINGS
VERY NICE

There are many alarm clocks around already, but the MP3 Alarm Clock is different in two regards. First, you can choose a variety of media to alarm you: MP3s, WAVs, MIDIs, and AIFFs are all supported. Second, you can have more than one alarm. Actually, you can have up to 14! It also supports a large, customizable, digital clock with different, you guessed it, skins.

Especially aimed at college students, this is a great alternative to that old, dirty alarm clock next to your bed. Just don't forget to keep your computer and the program running, or you'll miss your 8 o'clock class! The interface is easy to use and uncomplicated. One annoying detail is that it didn't accept my Audion MP3s. I had to "convert" them with SoundJam first for the alarm clock to recognize them.

Some Others

I hope this roundup gave you some idea of all the MP3 programs out there. There are a few programs we did not review that I at least want to mention:

AmpCaster 2.0

Web: http://www.vfxWeb.com/rsx/ampcaster.html

AmpCaster tracks streaming music servers and directs them to your player. Stay away from it. It's buggy, and for $5 it doesn't add much value to your player. Most of the major MP3 players support streaming directly anyway, and if you want a good tracker, go for AMP Radio[2].

AudioCatalyst 2.0.1

Web: http://www.xingtech.com/mp3/audiocatalyst/
Requirements: Power Mac with System 7.5.5, Open Transport 1.1.1 for CDDB access.

AudioCatalyst is a professional MP3 encoder for the Mac and PC, on par with N2MP3 and SoundJam. At $29.95, it is priced fairly reasonably in comparison to N2MP3, but SoundJam beats both in price. Unfortunately, there is no Mac demo version to test the program before you buy. It also appears that the company's priorities have shifted towards the Windows version.

MacP3 1.5

Web: http://www.macp3.net/
Requirements: Macintosh with System 7.5 or greater, about 4 MB of available RAM.

MacP3 is very similar to MP3 Rage[3], but not quite as powerful. It has one interesting feature though: "PCfy', which prepares your MP3 files for transport to a friend's PC by making sure they are named correctly, removing the Mac's resource fork, and generally preparing the file so it will be quickly recognized by Windows.

MegPeg 1.0

Web: http://megpeg.jdstudios.com/
Requirements: 120 MHz or faster Power Mac, 4 MB of available RAM.

MegPeg is a very simple, free, and glamorless player. It features a playlist with Play, Pause, and Stop. That's about it. Oh, and it has a very compact Music Strip mode, too. Version 2.0 is

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2. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/mp3roundup2.shtml
3. http://www.atpm.com/6.04/mp3roundup2.shtml

in the works and promises to add many more features and the ubiquitous skins, while still remaining free. We'll let you know when it's done.

MPegger 1.1.1

Web: http://www.proteron.com/mpegger/
Requirements: Power Mac.

MPegger has been around on the Mac for some time. @soft sold it to Proteron a while ago, and it was supposed to be integrated with N2MP3. So far, however, it's still sold separately for $24.95. It's a very decent program and a cheaper alternative to N2MP3. Its interface isn't quite as nice as N2MP3's, but it doesn't lack in terms of functionality. Once the two are combined, Proteron will have a real power tool in its hands.

QDesign MPV 1.1

Web: http://www.mvpsite.com/
Requirements: Power Mac with 100 MHz 603 or faster, Mac OS 7.5.3 or later, QuickTime 4.0.

MPV is a nice player with a neat interface. By the makers of the famous QuickTime 4 audio compression codec, it features many functions that you'd want: playlists, encoding (with three different encoders), CD support (including CDDB lookups), and much more. However, it isn't quite as nice as the other commercial players. However, its price is unclear is the price. There is a 30-day trial after which you need to register at the Web site. But the Web site has no information at all about pricing and registration. A version 1.2 is in the works. Watch out for this one: if QDesign puts some more work into it, MPV might become a real contender for the mighty three (SoundJam, Audion, and MacAST).

QuickAmp

Web: http://homepage.mac.com/gtijerino/index.html
Requirements: Power Mac with Sound Manager 3.0 and 6 MB of available RAM.

QuickAmp isn't a bad program, but boy is its interface confusing. It's quite powerful for a free program, maybe too much so in the beginning. But those who will be satisfied with its features will probably be scared away by the interface and want to go straight for one of the more commercial options, like Audion. A major new version is in the works though; let's hope that it will be more usable because the program definitely has potential.

SoundSpinner MP3 1.0

Web: http://www.optima-system.com/soundspinner/
Requirements: Power Mac with QuickTime 4.

SoundSpinner is a small MP3 player and album manager. For $8.95, it doesn't do a convincing job as either. If you want a real album manager, try mp3voodoo. Nice touches are the intro scan feature (similar to a CD player, where it just plays the beginning of songs to give you an overview) and the ability to export sounds in compressed QuickTime 4 formats.

Blindplayer 0.79

Web: http://www.dream-box.net/blindplayer/

Blindplayer is an awkward-to-use front end to SoundApp. Use at your own risk. It comes with code, so it might be interesting for programmers. The interesting part is that it allows you to control SoundApp remotely, i.e. from another computer or without a display connected to the computer (hence the name Blindplayer).

Easy MP3 Player 3.0

Web: http://user.tninet.se/%7Elwj846a/

A simple player with a hierarchical playlist and the ability to put a picture into the playlist background. Well, it's free so what can you say…

Which Program to Choose?

It is tough to single out a few programs. Many are very similar, both in features and price. Nevertheless, let me give you some opinions:

SoundJam MP Plus is a wonderful complete package. You cannot go wrong with it. Its strength is also its weakness, as it tends to be overburdened with features. However, at $39.95, it is well priced for all it does.

If you want something more nimble, go for Audion. If you want to create MP3 files, add Proteron's N2MP3 to the mix. If you want an even lighter interface, combine it with beHere. At $34.95, N2MP3 is pretty expensive, though. Let's hope Proteron will lower the price a bit. You can always combine it with BladeEnc for free encoding.

If you want pure lightness, go for MacAST Lite. Stay away from its big brother, MacAST, until @soft puts more work into it. MacAST Lite has most functions of a full player in a very compact interface.

For DJ work, use Tactile. I would stay away from the streaming server programs. They don't add much functionality that you won't find in the commercial players anyway—and given Audion's or MacAST Lite's prices, there really is no excuse to get something worse.

If you want to go free, use BladeEnc to encode MP3s and SoundJam MP Free 2.0.2 for your playback needs.

I hope this mini-series helped you sort the jungle of MP3 programs. I welcome comments from both readers and programmers of the mentioned (and forgotten) programs. The MP3 world is very dynamic, and programs evolve, so we will keep you posted on major changes in the Update section[4] of ATPM.

BY GREGORY TETRAULT, TETRAULT@HOME.COM

Quicken Deluxe 2000 Version 9—R3

Company: Intuit, Inc.
Web: http://www.intuit.com/
Street Price: $60

Quicken Deluxe for Macintosh allows you to organize and manage nearly all of your house-hold or small business financial tasks. For many people, that would be a fairly simple task. But for some, the task is complex. Quicken Deluxe works for both types of users.

Unlike previous versions, Quicken Deluxe 2000 does not come with a printed manual. The installation CD contains the application, help files (in Apple Guide format), and a 600-page PDF user's guide. Installation proceeds simply from a standard Installer VISE application. If you have a previous version of Quicken, the installer will make copies of your existing files and automatically upgrade your data files to work with Quicken 2000. The CD also contains installers for America Online 4.0, Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.5, and Acrobat Reader 4.0.

Quicken Deluxe consists of numerous modules organized on a special desktop. The Quicken desktop (see below) consists of a menu bar, a series of tabs for different types of accounts or activities, a context-sensitive row of button icons for various Quicken actions or features (the icons vary depending on which tab you are using), a row of buttons for each of your accounts, and an area for windows that display account lists, bank registers, stock port-folios, reports, graphs, etc. I found most of the tabs and button icons to be intuitive (pun intended). Icons with a yellow lightning bolt represent online actions. Clicking them will do one of the following: display a dialog box requesting information and action (such as typing a PIN to access your bank account), connect to a source of information without leaving

Quicken (such as getting stock quotes), or launch your browser to go to one of Intuit's Web sites.

The most common task for Quicken is to manage checking and savings accounts. Quicken should make this very easy, but doesn't. A thorough inspection of all the menu items, tabs, and button icons fails to reveal any direct choice for "New Account." Instead, you must choose "Accounts" from the "List" menu. The window that appears on your Quicken desktop (see above) contains a "New" button. Click that and a "Set Up Account" window appears with a list of account types. You click the radio button beside "Bank" and then type in the account name (e.g. My Checking) and an optional description.

Two checkboxes display options to hide this account (default is off) and to add the account to the toolbar as a text button (default is on). The buttons at the bottom of the window let you cancel account creation, add notes about the account, create the account (default choice), or enable online banking (if your bank supports it and you have online access).

When you create the account, a register window appears. This window looks just like the little paper registers given out by banks when you open an account. The first item is always "Opening Balance." Each register item can be selected by clicking with the mouse. You can then use tab and shift-tab to move from field to field, or you can use the mouse to select a field.

There are three ways to enter a date. The most obvious is to type the date in "m/d/yy" format. You can omit the year if the date you want is in the current year. You can change the existing date by clicking or holding down the + or - key. Finally, the date field includes a small calendar icon. Click it and a small calendar pops up. You can then click on a date in the current month or click on the arrows to change the month.

The number field is for recording either check number (the + and—keys work here, too) or transaction type (DEP for deposit, TXFR for transfer, ATM for an ATM transaction, SND for electronic check, WITHD for withdrawal, etc.). The payee field indicates whom a check is made out to or describes other types of transactions.

Quicken can use a feature called QuickFill to speed entry. If you enable QuickFill to work automatically, Quicken memorizes every transaction. When you start to type a new payee, QuickFill will use this memorized list to try and complete the entry. I strongly urge you to turn this feature off (Edit menu, Preferences, Register icon, "add new transactions to the QuickFill list"). The past four Macintosh versions of Quicken were prone to develop corrupted QuickFill lists that caused program instabilities (lots of crashes). You can use Quick-Fill manually by selecting transactions you wish to have memorized. When you wish to make a similar entry, Command-T will display a list of QuickFill transactions for you to choose from.
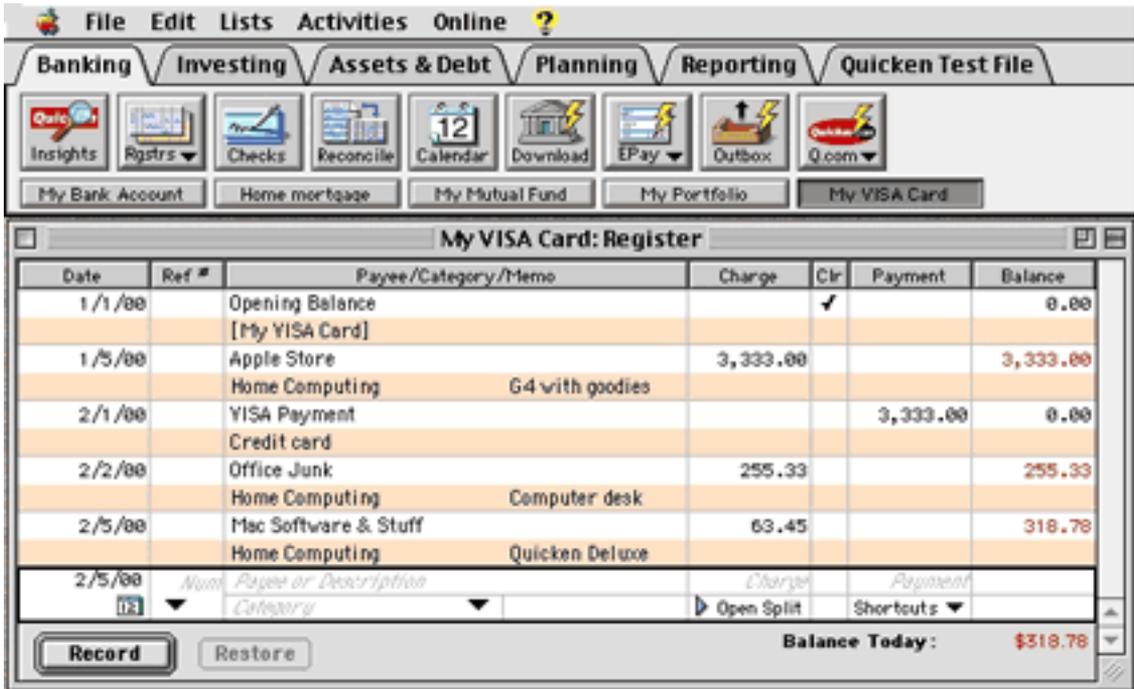
Quicken's bank accounts can do more than track deposits, withdrawals, and checks. Quicken allows you to print checks. Most printers are supported. You will need to buy special checks depending on whether your printer is pin-feed or sheet-feed. Quicken also supports three check styles: standard, voucher, and wallet. You will have to do a significant amount of tweaking to get the checks to print perfectly. Quicken includes guide templates

for pin-feed printers. I recommend cutting plain paper to the size of your check sheets to adjust text placement on sheet-feed printers.

Of course, if you don't want to fiddle with written or printed checks, Quicken supports electronic checks. If you have set up electronic banking, clicking the EPay icon gives a list of options: Enter Payment, Send Payments…, Cancel Payment…, Online Payees, View Payment Status, Payment Query, and Payment Log. The Online Payees choice shows a list of check recipients. New recipients can be added via that list or by typing a new entry into the payee field of the electronic check.

Online payees is one area where Quicken needs improvement. The online payees are a separate database. QuickFill does not work when entering information, even if the payee was already listed in the QuickFill database. Quicken also has an annoying habit of changing the information for online payees without informing you. It does this after making an electronic payment and getting feedback from the payee. Quicken uses an outside company to process electronic checks. What you will discover is that many times the company simply issues a paper check to your payees. If the payee is widely used by other electronic bankers, or if you've sent many payments to the payee, then the company will set-up true electronic fund transfers. Your checking account therefore can have four types of payments: checks you

write, checks printed by the online company, electronic checks, and automatic payments you set up with payees who accept them.

Quicken allows you to manage many different types of financial accounts including cash, credit cards (see above), stock and fund portfolios (see below), mortgages, loans, and assets. Cash accounts are the simplest. Portfolios are more difficult to set up and use, but can handle many investments such as stocks, mutual funds, bonds, money market accounts, annuities, Certificates of Deposit, etc.

Quicken can go online and obtain stock and fund quotes. You can graph stock and fund prices and trading volumes. You can even do this with stocks you don't own via Quicken's WatchList. Portfolios are more complicated to set up than bank accounts. You also have to differentiate between buying and selling shares and moving shares in or out of your portfolio. Portfolios can contain mixtures of security types: stocks, bonds, annuities, mutual funds, cash, money market accounts, and other investments. When you set up each security, you can enter trading symbols and other information such as a mutual fund's investment type (growth, income, high or low risk, college fund). Quicken has simple one-click button

links to obtain either recent quotes or historical quotes (as far back as five years) from the Quicken Web site.

Quicken mortgage and loan accounts allow you to track the status of these liabilities. Both accounts can be linked to your bank accounts. If everything is set up correctly (not an easy task, especially for adjustable rate mortgages), the payments from your bank account will be automatically split between interest, principal, and other payments (escrow, insurance, taxes).
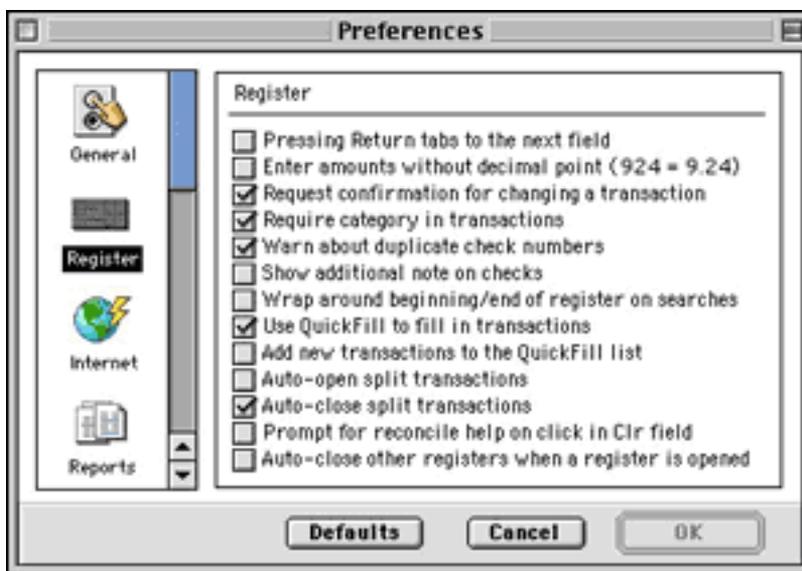
Quicken automatically applies the principal payment to the mortgage or loan account. I experienced major problems with mortgage accounts in Quicken Deluxe 1999. Setup information sometimes disappeared, and payment split calculations became incorrect. I gave up on Quicken and used a spreadsheet to calculate principal and interest on each payment. I do not know if Quicken Deluxe 2000 has fixed the problems with mortgage accounts.

Quicken Deluxe 2000 offers an extensive choice of reports and graphs for all types of accounts and activities. Quicken also offers budgeting features and reports. Reports can be generated easily if you select QuickReport from the Activities menu or Reporting desktop toolbar. If you wish to customize reports and graphs, Quicken presents dialog windows that allow you many choices: account names, security names, payees, income vs. expense, date

ranges, categories, etc. Once the report is generated, you can adjust fonts, page breaks, column visibility and other items using the icon buttons above the report. Column widths are adjusted by dragging diamonds between column headings.

Quicken's reports work well. Quicken's graphs are not customizable beyond data selection and overall size. You can not change axis limits, column spacing, colors, position of legend or labels, etc. If you want to customize a graph, you will have to generate the equivalent report and export it. You can then import the report into a spreadsheet or charting application and generate a customized graph.

Quicken has another very useful feature: the ability to export tax-related data directly to MacInTax (and indirectly to other tax software). However, this provides value only if you set up your accounts and categories correctly and apply the categories diligently to all tax-related transactions such as depositing your paycheck. For example, a paycheck would be split into multiple categories: salary, tax withholdings (federal, state, local, Medicare, and Social Security), pretax medical and dental insurance, and pretax pension contributions. Each mortgage payment would have to show its tax deductible interest component. I recommend printing and carefully reviewing a Quicken tax report before exporting your tax data.

Quicken allows you to set a number of preferences that cover the general functioning of the program as well as default settings for registers, reports, graphs, check printing, Web connection, backups, "Billminder" (transaction reminder program), stock and fund quotes, passwords, etc. (see above). You should examine all the preferences and carefully choose

your options. Unfortunately, the Apple Guide-based Quicken Help has little detail on preferences, and the User's Guide scatters preferences information throughout its chapters (and sometimes simply tells you to use Quicken Help).

Intuit's technical support for Quicken is terrible. There is no email or snail mail support. There used to be no Web-based support other than an outdated listing of frequently asked questions. Intuit recently added the ability to submit questions via a Web page form. However, you will not get a reply. If the question is deemed worthwhile, Quicken staff may add it to their online "KnowledgeBase." Quicken offers automated fax or telephone support if you don't have Internet access. You dial a toll-free number, work your way through many menus, and choose an option that you hope will address your problem. Live telephone support costs $1.95 per minute, except for installation problems. I do not know the quality of Quicken's live phone support. Besides Quicken's KnowledgeBase, I recommend looking at the following reports for user-described problems, work-arounds, and solutions.

- http://www.macintouch.com/quicken2000.html
- http://www.macfixit.com/reports/quicken2000.shtml

The Bottom Line

Quicken Deluxe 2000 is a bargain. For about $60 (typical street price) you get a program that can help you organize all your personal or small business finances. Weaknesses include excessive difficulties in setting-up accounts, overuse of dialog boxes, lack of a printed manual, insufficient and poorly organized online manual, and expensive live technical support.

BY DANIEL CHVATIK, DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM

Rocket eBook Pro

Company: NuvoMedia, Inc.
Web: http://www.rocket-ebook.com/
Price: $269 (Pro version—16 MB); $199 (standard version—4 MB)
Weight: 22 oz
Dimensions: 5 x 7.5 x 1.5 inch (12.7 x 17.8 x 3.8 cm)
Requirements: Power Macintosh, Mac OS 8.5 or higher, 10 MB of RAM for Rocket eBook software, one available serial port (USB machines require USB-to-serial adapter), Internet access and Web browser.

Reading has not changed much since the invention of the printing press by Johann Gutenberg in 1455. Sure, you can read texts on your computer screen, but most people agree that it is very awkward and are happy to get away from their screens and relax with a good book. eBooks, or electronic books, are the digital age's answer to the last realm of civilization that so far seems to have been spared the intrusions of computers and electronics. To me, it is amazing that they have not appeared sooner, given the many advantages of digitization. But before we get to the Rocket eBook, here's a short discussion of the current state of electronic books.

Currently, there are two major electronic book producers in the US: NuvoMedia (makers of the eBook) and SoftBook Press (with its SoftBook Reader, also reviewed[1] in this issue). Their two formats are incompatible at this time. Well, it turns out that on January 18 both companies were bought up[2] by Gemstar Ltd., known to some through the "VCR Plus+" and "TV Guide" brands.

What does this mean for eBooks? Not much is publicly known, but I dare to guess that it will be positive in the long run. Both companies are working with publishers on the Open eBook standard (OEB), a planned international standard for electronic books. This will likely limit

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1.   http://www.atpm.com/6.05/softbookreader.shtml
2.   http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/000118/ca_gemstar_1.html

the appearance of different, incompatible readers, a phenomenon that would split the market further and worsen a major problem right now: the lack of electronic titles.

On March 15, Gemstar announced[3] a "long term strategic agreement" with Thomson Multimedia "to jointly pursue the digital electronic book…market worldwide." Here is an excerpt from the PR:

> Under the agreement, Thomson will license eBook technology from Gemstar, and commit to a multi-year product shipment plan aimed at placing tens of millions of eBook devices into consumers' homes and establishing eBook readers as the preferred choice for reading novels and periodicals.

Both companies said they planned to release new versions of the Rocket eBook and SoftBook Reader "later this year." Gemstar is also contemplating the addition of some PDA-style features such as a calendar or email.

Of course, they are not quite without competition: Microsoft is trying to add its touch[4]. Currently, however, Microsoft is a member of the OEB initiative. Adobe is also active[5], getting PDFs onto Palms[6]. Everybook[7] is working on a next-generation "Reader." The current burst of activity is good for customers in the long run, when hopefully the best format will win.

• • •

But back to the Rocket eBook. What is it? A relatively light-weight (22 oz.) and small (about the size of a larger pocket-sized novel) electronic device with the sole purpose of displaying electronic text and allowing you to work with the text as you would with a regular book. How does it stack up? Pretty well. But as with most nascent technologies, there are some problems.

Some technical details first, though. There are actually two versions of the Rocket eBook. The regular eBook has 4 MB of flash memory, which is enough to store about 10 "regular" books or 4,000 pages. The Pro version has 16 MB of memory, good for about 40 books or

3. http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/000315/ca_gemstar_1.html
4. http://www.salon.com/tech/log/2000/02/24/reader/index.html
5. http://www.adobe.com/epaper/
6. http://www.palm.com
7. http://www.everybook.net/

16,000 pages. I find those estimates rather optimistic, especially if you have a publication with lots of pictures.

Speaking of pictures, the eBook is capable of displaying them, but the screen is only black-and-white. The screen is 106 dpi (as compared to about 72 dpi or more on a regular Mac display), or 480 x 320 pixels on a 4.5 x 3 inch touch screen. Although the resolution is higher, it still feels as pixelated as text on a computer screen, probably because you view the pixels from a shorter distance. However, it is much easier on the eyes, especially for longer reading periods. There is also a little speaker that supports the playback of .WAV files, but neither the documents I read nor the operating system used it.

The enclosure of the eBook is a beautiful grayish black plastic with a high-tech style, complete with buttons for next page, previous page, on-off. It is designed for a tight grip, with the left side of the device thickened to fit well into your hand. Unfortunately, I find that the next/previous page buttons, located in the middle of that thick side, are too low. In a com-

fortable position, my thumb rests on the previous page button, not the next page button. It's a detail, but nevertheless annoying. The second way of moving between pages is the "navigation bar" on the right. Similar to a Macintosh scroll bar, it displays the location of the current page within the document. Using the integrated stylus or your thumb, you can move around on that bar to jump to different pages. Although it is a nice idea, it still feels worse than just turning the pages of a real book.

This pattern repeats itself throughout the product: good idea, less than perfect execution. Above and below the display area there are four soft-buttons that act as extensions of the touch screen. On the bottom right is the bookshelf, which allows you to jump between titles, delete titles, change settings, and get information about the eBook. The eBook can display the current time, too, but it turns out that the clock is hidden in the "About Rocket eBook" item that appears in the menu when you press the Bookshelf button. "About Rocket eBook" also displays the status of the battery and the memory.
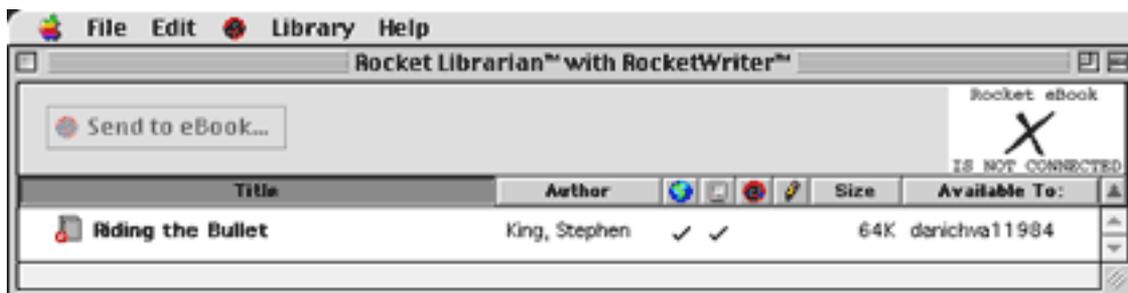
Next to the bookshelf, on the bottom left, is the Book button. Its menu houses the Lookup, Underline, Add note, Set bookmark, Previous Location, and About This Title commands, as well as the submenus for Bookmarks and Go To. Where is Find? In the Go To menu, of course; where else? Another thing that feels unnatural at first are the different modes, which operate a bit unlike a regular computer application would. If you want to underline something, you choose the underline command and then select what you want underlined or not underlined (to clear an underline). For a lookup, it works the same way: select the lookup command, and then the word you want to lookup. At first, I tried to select a passage and then the command to work on it, as I am used to from my computer.

Anyway, what are all those commands? Underline works just like it would in a real book. Same for Add Note, which displays a little triangle to indicate that a note is present. Clicking on the triangle recalls your note, which you can then move, edit or delete, unlike in a real book. Bookmarks work similarly. They appear in the bookmark menu together with the first few words of the paragraph you bookmarked. They also appear on the bookshelf. Should you wonder what a word means, just use the Lookup feature to find the definition in the built-in dictionary. My favorite feature (after finally finding it) is Find. I often recall a certain passage by a few keywords, but don't remember where exactly it is. Find will locate those passages for you, just like the Find command in a regular application. How often have I wished for something like that when I was trying to find a selection in a regular book…

The next button is Page Orientation, on the top right. Pressing this button displays four arrows on the screen that let you switch the eBook between four orientations: portrait, landscape, and their reverses.

The last button, on the top left, is the Shortcut button. Pressing it executes the one function you need most. It comes preprogrammed to change font sizes, but you can reprogram it to whichever function you want. How? I was looking for such an option in the Settings submenu of the Bookshelf menu. Nope. Nor was it in the included configuration software for the Mac. Instead, what you do is open the menu that contains the desired command, then press the shortcut button, and then select the command. Hmmm, who came up with that idea? There are a few more surprises like that, so it pays to read the manual.

The manual, of course, is included just in electronic format. There is however, a short QuickStart Guide. It ignores the Mac entirely, but fortunately it talks mostly about the eBook and not the PC software. In the back of the QuickStart Guide is a CD with the Mac and PC software. The main purpose of the software is to get new content into your eBook. There are different ways to accomplish that. You can either download an HTML document from your computer or download a Web site (with pictures and even with links within the site). I tried it for an entire issue of ATPM, and that didn't work too well. However, it worked great for a single article. For the PC, there is also the RocketWriter, which allows you to upload text files and Word documents. Let's hope that will makes it to the Mac soon. Of course, you can just use another Mac program (like BBEdit) to create an HTML file from your texts, so it's not that crucial. The other advantage of the RocketWriter is that it allows you to read unencrypted texts on your computer screen, should you want to do so.

The "Rocket Librarian," your connection to the eBook and your electronic content.

The other way to get new texts is to buy a new book from [Barnes & Noble](#)[8] or [Powell's](#)[9]. At the time of this review, B&N had 2,754 Rocket Editions. This is one of the drawbacks of electronic books. You can't just get any book. It has to be available in a compatible format. The Rocket Edition format is actually a subset of HTML, so it is relatively easy for publishers to transform their work to electronic format, but many haven't done so yet. So better make sure your favorite books and authors are available. Some authors have actually started to push the format. For example, Stephen King's newest story, *Riding the Bullet*, appeared exclusively in electronic formats (aside: Mr. King supposedly is a big Mac fan himself). As a promotion, the download was even free for a while, and because there is no Macintosh software reader yet, Mac users might still be able to get the eBook for free [until one is released](#)[10]. Some newspapers are also published as eBooks, such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*.

Availability of titles isn't the only problem. Pricing is another. Given the marginal cost of publishing a book electronically, you would expect that eBooks would be somewhat cheaper than real paper books, especially given your up-front investment in the reader. Well, it seems they are a bit cheaper, maybe 20% on average; but in some cases they are actually more expensive! Take *Oprah Winfrey Speaks*, which sells for $11.86 on B&N.com. Well, the Rocket Edition costs $13.56. No comment. On the other hand, *Riding the Bullet* (after it's free promotion) is priced at a reasonable $2.50. At least electronic books can never go out of print! Three titles are already included with the eBook: the electronic manual, eDictionary 2.0 (which is also used for the lookups) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

So how do you connect the eBook to your computer? It comes with a cradle that connects through the serial port (newer Mac users will need to get a USB-serial converter or an internal serial port card for the G3/G4). Putting the eBook into the cradle starts charging the internal battery and allows you to connect through the Rocket Librarian software. Besides uploading content into the player and downloading your markup information (underlines etc.), it also allows you to change the fonts of the eBook (you can switch between two fonts on the machine), change the AutoTimeout interval (to preserve battery life), synchronize the clock, or upload new firmware (for example, to accept the OEB format in the future). The battery is supposed to last for 20 hours with backlight turned on at the default setting (you can make it lighter or darker if you want) or about 40 hours with backlight turned off.

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8. http://www.barnesandnoble.com
9. http://www.powells.com
10. http://www.simonsays.com/book/book_0743204670.html

Given my experience, those estimates are rather optimistic. I also found the eBook unusable with backlight off, except in very good lighting conditions.

Although the eBook is a bit heavy, I found that it is actually comfortable to hold. You don't have to worry about keeping two pages apart all the time, something that is especially hard with some new paperbacks. To guarantee copyrights for the authors, each Rocket eBook is registered to a single owner. You get a Rocket ID, which you use on the Web site when you purchase a book. The book can then only be read on your eBook, not somebody else's. Because the eBook format uses HTML, hyperlinks are possible, another advantage over traditional books.

When you start your eBook, there is a slight delay of a few seconds. Although it isn't long, it can be a bit annoying. Luckily you always end up at the last page you read, even when you switch books. Another notable feature is the support for Allegra, an input method similar to Palm's Graffiti, that allows you to enter text by writing characters onto the screen. If you don't want to learn it, you can simply use an on-screen keyboard, and if you don't want to use the stylus, the touch screen also reacts to your fingers, albeit a bit sluggishly.

So what makes the Rocket eBook so great? For the technophile, it's just plain cool. Heavy travelers will find it useful because it can hold many books in a single compact package. The power supply accepts international voltages and detaches for easier transport. The batteries are non-standard and not exchangeable, so forget your two-week literary trip through the wilderness. The powerful backlight means you can read at night without disturbing your companions. Electronic features like find, lookup, and hyperlinks introduce the convenience and power of computers. People who have problems with their eyesight will find the customizable fonts to be a life-saver. Just switch to the built-in large font or upload an even larger font. By default, the eBook comes with Verdana 10 and 14, and you can upload fonts up to 28 point.

Despite its many advantages, I am not fully sold on the Rocket eBook. The Mac software seems very buggy. I had tons of errors and problems uploading HTML files and fonts. It would even refuse to reupload built-in books, giving me errors until I deleted the library database. Currently there is also no infrared support for Mac, but they are working on that. Uploading a 16-point font caused some parts of the letters to be chopped off. The last thing that irritated me was the sluggishness of the LCD screen, which made quick browsing through pages impossible.

Users of a Palm or Visor might try the Doc format for their devices rather than investing in yet another gadget. While their screens are somewhat smaller, the bigger screen alone might not justify the current expense of a separate eBook reader for them.

It was hard to arrive at a single rating for the Rocket eBook. While the idea and potential are excellent, its current technical problems, the relatively high price of the device and titles, as well as the lack of the latter force me to give a Good (three out of five) right now. I hope to be able to give future generations of the eBook higher ratings. Potential buyers might want to wait for the release of new models later this year.

ATPM RATINGS

GOOD

BY MIKE SHIELDS, MSHIELDS@ATPM.COM

ScreenTest 1.1

Company: CompleatMac Software
Web: http://home.nycap.rr.com/compleatmac/
Price: $10 (shareware)

ScreenTest is a movie trivia game to test your knowledge with quotes from more than 300 movies. The game provides the quote, and the player names the movie. A complete round consists of 20 quotes for you to identify. A "Hint" button is available if you need help (which I needed on more than one occasion)—however, sometimes the hint is either not helpful or non-existent.

For example, the quote appears, four Bill Murray movies are the choices, and the hint is, "Bill Murray said this." That narrows it down! And this hint appeared on more than one occasion. Apparently, the author is a Bill Murray fan.

Another problem is that when I guessed wrong, I wasn't told what the correct answer was. I'm sure that if I were to play the game all day, I'd eventually get around to seeing the same quote again and making another guess-but I only played a few times.

Now, the good news: I liked it. It was easy to play, and since I am The Hollywood Guy, I recognized most of the quotes. The only ones I missed were (as noted above) the ones for which a hint wasn't available when I needed it.

The game was written with SuperCard, and the author is a member of the SuperCard Webring (which I cruised, finding some other gems). I don't know about $10; I'd pay $5 for this, with the hope that the flaws I mentioned will be fixed in version 2. I do predict hours of enjoyment for those who love movies.

BY DANIEL CHVATIK, DCHVATIK@ATPM.COM

SoftBook Reader

Company: SoftBook® Press
Web: http://www.softbook.com/
Price: $599.95 or $299.95 plus $19.95 per month "content package" for 24 months, enterprise pricing available
Weight: 2.9 pounds (1.3 kg)
Dimensions: about 8.75 x 10.5 x 1.25 inch (22 x 26.75 x 3.25 cm)
Requirements: analog telephone line for local calls to download books, in USA & Canada only; Internet connection and IE or Netscape 4.0 to upload text content
Requirements for Personal Publisher: Power Macintosh with 10 MB of free RAM, System 7.5 or later, Microsoft Word 98.

In this article, I will describe the SoftBook Reader in detail and point out where it is different from the Rocket eBook. I will assume that you have read the introduction to electronic books in the Rocket eBook review in this issue.

Compared to the Rocket eBook, the SoftBook Reader is big—about the size of a sheet of letter paper (or DIN A4, for our European readers). When I first saw the Reader, I was rather amazed because the front of it is covered by a leather binding. The leather forms a protective cover when it's held in place by two little magnets. This is a nice touch, and it seems quite luxurious in today's world of plastic gadgets. The device itself is set in a pleasant dark green plastic that is textured for a better grip.

Opening the cover turns on the device. You you will immediately notice what causes the size difference: the large display. Measuring 6 x 8 inches or about 9.5 inches diagonally (about 24.1 cm), the grayscale, backlit, and touch-sensitive LCD is impressively large. The right side of the screen contains two dials for adjusting its brightness and contrast. While the grayscale makes the display better suited for graphics and rich user interfaces, I found it more fuzzy and harder to read than the black-and-white screen of the Rocket eBook. It was also much worse for viewing from an angle. Like the eBook, the Reader features a little speaker for alerting users of errors, similar to the Mac OS's alert sound.
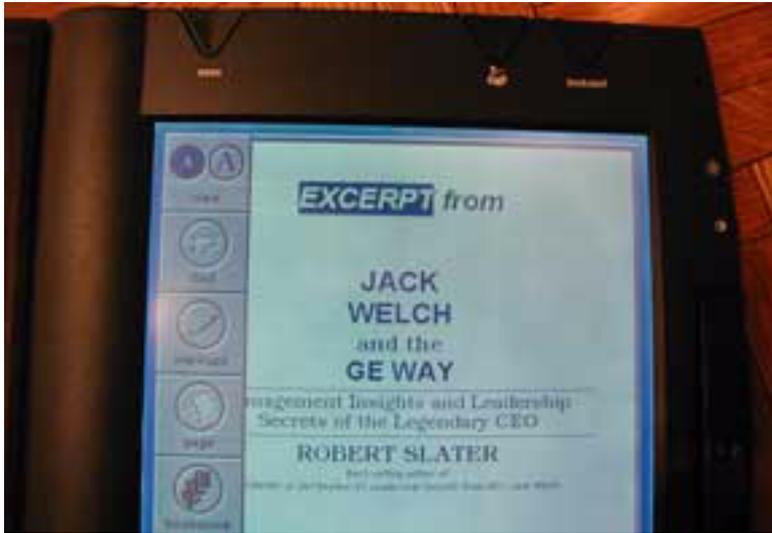
Unlike the eBook, the Reader does not require you to own a Mac or PC; it's like a little computer by itself. This is a big plus for some people, but not for the Macintosh-owning public.

When you want to upload data, you don't connect the Reader to a Mac. Instead, you connect its internal 33.6Kbps modem to an analog phone line. The Reader can then dial into the SoftBook network to receive content through a local call. This service is currently restricted to the US and Canada. The user manual, which is mostly electronic except for a Getting Started booklet, explains the process of how to configure the Reader for different phone line settings.

Back to the computer-like behavior. The Reader has a relatively simple hardware interface, with three buttons on the top, the two mentioned dials on the right side, and a hard-to-describe thumb bar on the side. Tilting the bar to the left or right, pages you backward or forward through your virtual books or magazines. Although it sounds a bit awkward, it actually feels quite natural.

The three buttons at the top have simple functions:

One is the menu button, which logically pulls down a menu on the display. Next is a programmable shortcut button, not unlike the eBook's. Finally is the Bookshelf button, which takes you to your bookshelf.

It took me a while to figure it out, but the menu is actually context sensitive. Its commands depend on whether you are currently reading a book, browsing your bookshelf, or at the "bookstore." When reading a book, the menu contains such items as Find, Markups, and Page. When you are in your bookshelf, the commands change to Info and Preferences, and when you are at the [bookstore][1] (which you reach through a Bookstore menu command), the options become Directory and Disconnect. Common commands such as Off and the battery indicator can be found in every mode.

The philosophy of the interface is a bit like that of a regular computer's graphical user interface. By that, I mean that you select a command (such as Select) from the menu or the tool palette and then select the text that you want selected. The tool palette is a little collapsible bar that contains tools for drawing, erasing, highlighting, and selecting. These work just like you would assume. Draw, for example, allows you to draw on the screen with the stylus or your finger, like you would with the pencil tool in a Macintosh graphics application. Erase works like the eraser in a graphics application.

The touch screen is much more responsive than the Rocket eBook's and even allows you to write little notes with the drawing tool. Unlike the eBook, there is no direct note function, but you can draw your notes right over the existing text. You can even insert or delete your own pages and fill them with drawings and hand-written notes—similar to what you would do with a paper book.

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1.   http://www.softbook.com/store/index.asp

The Reader has no character recognition software like the eBook's Allegra. Instead, it often prompts you with little on-screen keyboards that you 'type' on with your fingers. I have to admit that it was a lot of fun; and, though not quite as good as my computer keyboard, it worked amazingly well. Don't get me wrong: the on-screen keyboard is not for typing long texts, but it's nearly perfect for entering search terms or your credit card information when buying more books from the online bookstore.Noteworthy is the lack of a bookmark feature like the eBook's. However, you can sequentially search through your markups.

Of course, the larger display and better functionality come at a price, both literally and figuratively. At $599.95, it is not cheap. The second option of $299.95 and $19.95 of content per month for 24 months runs to a total of $778.75, but it might pay off if you plan to spend that much on books and magazines anyway. On the other hand, there is a 30-day money-back satisfaction guarantee, so if you're in doubt and can afford the price tag, it might be worthwhile to at least give it a try.

The second price you pay is in terms of battery life. The batteries are supposed to last five hours, but in my experience the number is more like three or four, depending on how much you use the modem and how you have a configured the display. Recharging the batteries takes about an hour, and the power adapter can deal with international voltages. At least the battery is removable, so in theory you can have multiple sets of batteries.

In terms of storage, the Reader comes with 8 MB of memory, allegedly enough for 5000 pages, and it can be expanded with optional flash memory "up to 50,000" pages. Like the Rocket eBook, the Reader will be Open eBook–compliant through a firmware upgrade (OEB is an extension of the HTML 4.0 markup language), but currently the selection of titles is somewhat limited. Of course, if you are unhappy with the selection you can upload your own documents, similar to the eBook. You have two options: either you can upload Simple Text files using the Web based interface[2] or you can use the free Personal Publisher tool to convert and upload Microsoft Word files. While the former worked like a charm for me, I had some trouble with the latter. I will blame it on the problems I had during the software installation and assume that it works.

To get the titles into your Reader, you simply connect to your online bookshelf and then download the content into the Reader. All your purchases are also stored on the online bookshelf, so you can download them again later.

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2. http://my.softbook.net/

For publishers, the SoftBook Professional Publisher is available and supports formats such as QuarkXPress and Adobe FrameMaker. This brings me to another topic: while the SoftBook Reader works great for individuals, it was designed in part with companies in mind. The idea is very simple. Many companies require their personnel to have up-to-date information and to have quick access to that information wherever they are. The phone line connectivity will allow employees to download important sales information from everywhere and to carry it all in one simple, compact device.

Another strength of the Reader is periodicals. The "electronic newsstand" offers subscriptions to magazines like *Time* ($49.95 a year), *Newsweek* ($40.95), the *Wall Street Journal* ($90), and many [more](#)[3]. The Reader has the ingenious ability to automatically download them overnight, at a time specified by you. All you have to do is connect it to the phone line before you go to bed. When you wake up in the morning, it will already contain your downloaded subscriptions. The larger grayscale display makes the Reader more suitable for magazines and larger pictures. The downloads usually take some time, but this doesn't matter because you're sleeping.

The SoftBook Reader and the Rocket eBook both have advantages and disadvantages. If money were no object, I would get the SoftBook Reader. It just feels more like a traditional book, and the bigger screen and more natural interface are a big plus. On the other hand, the eBook has some additional features: bookmarks, handwriting recognition, and the ability to upload custom fonts. If price is very important, you might be better off with the Rocket eBook. The choice will also depend on your need for mobility, and on factors such as weight and battery life.

Both are early products in a developing market, so you might choose to wait for the second generations of electronic books that should appear later this year. They will be cheaper, lighter, and have more features.

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3. http://www.softbook.com/store/newsstand.asp

What Is ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh (ATPM) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or "e-zine." ATPM was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. *About This Particular Macintosh* is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

Are You Looking for New Staff Members?

We currently need several **Contributing Editors**, an **Interviews Manager**, a **Copy Editor**, and a **Publicity Manager**. Please contact us at editor@atpm.com if you're interested.

How Can I Subscribe to ATPM?

Visit http://www.atpm.com/subscribe or send an e-mail to subscriptions@atpm.com with the word **help** in the subject line.

Unsubscribing: Should you wish to discontinue receiving ATPM, you can unsubscribe at any time by visiting http://www.atpm.com/subscribe or sending a message to subscriptions@atpm.com with **unsubscribe list_name** in the body of the message (where **list_name** is the name of the list you're subscribed to). But who would want to unsubscribe from ATPM? Actually, if you wouldn't mind doing us a favor—should you, for any reason, desire to no longer be subscribed to ATPM, please let us know why. We learn a lot from our readers.

Which Format Is Best for Me?

The Online Webzine edition is for people who want to view AT℗M in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to AT℗M back issues and other Web pages. You can use Sherlock to <u>search</u>[1] all of the online issues at once.

The Acrobat PDF edition is optimized for printing, but it can also be viewed on-screen, and we've increased the font sizes to make this easier. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free <u>Acrobat Reader</u>[2] on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.

The Offline Webzine is a HTML version of AT℗M that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a StuffIt archive to reduce file size. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.

The eDOC edition of AT℗M is a self-reading document that, like our old DOCMaker format, may be read on just about every Mac ever made, without any additional software. It features a table of contents, clickable URLs, high-quality printing, and easy magnification and searching. Oh, and it's **very** fast.

What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can <u>download Adobe Acrobat Reader</u>[3] for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 4 has better quality and performance. AT℗M is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.
- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.
- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks pane; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/search
2. http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html
3. http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html

- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.
- All blue-underlined links are clickable. Links to external Websites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.
- You can hold down option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.

What Are Some Tips for Printing the PDF?

The PDF edition uses large fonts for on-screen readability. The side effect is that they then print larger than desired. We think that if you print ATPM at two pages per sheet, the fonts will come out perfectly sized for reading from paper. Go to the Layout page of the Acrobat's Print… dialog box and choose "2" from the popup menu.

Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

In the PDF edition of ATPM, links that are double-underlined lead to other pages in the same PDF. Links that are single-underlined will open in your Web browser.

What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

ATPM and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using early versions of StuffIt Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding ATPM, we recommend upgrading to StuffIt Expander 5.1.4 or later[4].

How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for ATPM, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

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4. http://www.aladdinsys.com/expander/index.html

How Can I Send a Letter to the Editor?

Got a comment about an article that you read in ATPM? Is there something you'd like us to write about in a future issue? We'd love to hear from you. Send your e-mail to editor@atpm.com. We often publish the e-mail that comes our way.

Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

Of course. E-mail our Help Department at help@atpm.com.

How Can I Contribute to ATPM?

There are several sections of ATPM to which readers frequently contribute:

Segments—Slices from the Macintosh Life: This is one of our most successful spaces and one of our favorite places. We think of it as kind of the ATPM "guest room." This is where we will publish that sentimental Macintosh story that you promised yourself you would one day write. It's that special place in ATPM that's specifically designated for your stories. We'd really like to hear from you. Several Segments contributors have gone on to become ATPM **columnists**. Send your stuff to editor@atpm.com.

Hardware and Software Reviews: ATPM publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works, how it may help them in their work, and how enthusiastic they are about recommending it to others. If you have a new piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review, contact our reviews editor at reviews@atpm.com for more information.

Shareware Reviews: Most of us have been there; we find that special piece of shareware that significantly improves the quality our Macintosh life and we wonder why the entire world hasn't heard about it. Now here's the chance to tell them! Simply let us know by writing up a short review for our shareware section. Send your reviews to reviews@atpm.com.

Wishful Thinking: Is the space for Mac enthusiasts who know exactly (if you do say so yourself) what Apple should do with its advertising campaigns and product introductions. Have you come up with a great advertising tag line? What about that Mac campaign that has

been stewing in the back of your mind? Send your big ideas (or your art) to editor@atpm.com.

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

Check our reviews index at http://www.atpm.com/reviews for the complete list.

Will You Review My Product?

If you or your company has a product that you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy our way. We're always looking for interesting pieces of software to try out. Contact reviews@atpm.com for shipping information.

Can I Sponsor ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh is free, and we intend to keep it this way. Our editors and staff are volunteers with "real" jobs who believe in the Macintosh way of computing. We don't make a profit, nor do we plan to. As such, we rely on advertisers to help us pay for our Web site and other expenses. Please consider supporting ATPM by advertising in our issues and on our web site. Contact advertise@atpm.com for more information.

Where Can I Find Back Issues of ATPM?

Back issues of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format from ftp://ftp.atpm.com and http://www.atpm.com/Back. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML form at http://www.atpm.com/Back. You can search all of our back issues from http://www.atpm.com/search.

What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

We hope by now that you've found what you're looking for (We can't imagine there's something else about ATPM that you'd like to know.). But just in case you've read this far (We appreciate your tenacity.) and still haven't found that little piece of information about ATPM that you came here to find, please feel free to e-mail us at (You guessed it.) editor@atpm.com.

This is the latest in ATPM's series of trivia challenges. Answers to this month's trivia challenge will be found in the next issue of ATPM. If you have any suggestions for future trivia challenges, or would like to contribute a trivia challenge, please email me at egoss@atpm.com.

This month's prize of a dynamite ATPM t-shirt[1] goes to the first two correct entries I receive at egoss@atpm.com. Individual readers are eligible to win only once every twelve months.

This month's trivia challenge is a list of cities and their nicknames. Be careful: there are more cities than nicknames! See if you can match the nickname on the left with the city on the right, as you take part in:

Trivia Challenge 6.05—Nickname This!

1.	The Motor City		A.	Boston
2.	The Windy City		B.	Calcutta
3.	The Big Apple		C.	Chicago
4.	Beantown		D.	Cincinnati
5.	The Queen City Of The West		E.	Dallas
6.	The City Of Light		F.	Denver
7.	Rocket City, USA		G.	Detroit
8.	The City By The Bay		H.	Houston
9.	The Mile High City		I.	Huntsville
10.	The Emerald City		J.	New Orleans

1. http://www.atpm.com/store/

Trivia Challenge 6.05—Nickname This!

11.	The Big "D"	K.	New York City
12.	The City Of Brotherly Love	L.	London
		M.	Paris
		N.	Philadelphia
		O.	San Francisco
		P.	Seattle

Last Month's Answers—6.04—Potpourri Puzzler

1.	Which country was the only one to repay its War Reparations Debt after WWI?	B.	Finland
2.	Who provided the voice for ET, the extraterrestrial?	C.	Debra Winger
3.	Where would you find the Tennis Hall Of Fame?	A.	Rhode Island
4.	Which is the most densely populated country in the world?	C.	Monaco
5.	What country issued the first postage stamps?	A.	Great Britain
6.	What are the French-speaking residents of Belgium called?	A.	Walloons
7.	What country was previously called Bechuanaland?	C.	Botswana
8.	Although England's King from 1714–1727, which German-born Royal could not speak English?	A.	George I
9.	What color appears in more flags of the world than any other?	B.	Red
10.	Who is the only US President to actually be born in Illinois?	C.	Ronald Regan

Last Month's Answers—6.04—Potpourri Puzzler

11.	What was the name of Winston Churchill's favorite cat?	B.	Nelson
12.	Who won the 1999 NCAA Men's National Basketball Championship?	C.	University Of Connecticut

The Rules

Each question has only **one** correct answer. The answers are stored in a hermetically sealed envelope guarded by a friendly Siamese cat named "Emily" who lives in our house.

This Month's CD Recommendation

"Deadicated,[2]" by Various Artists. My short review: simply the best tribute album ever. Buy it! The details: more of a travelling road show than a serious studio band, it has always been difficult to get people to take The Grateful Dead's music seriously. This album changes that misconception. With a "who's who" lineup that reads like the bill at a early 90's Grammy Awards Show, "Deadicated" is about the music, and succeeds like no other tribute album ever has.

Artists include Los Lobos, Bruce Hornsby, Elvis Costello, Suzanne Vega, Dwight Yoakam, Warren Zevon, The Cowboy Junkies, The Indigo Girls, Midnight Oil, Burning Spear, Jane's Addiction, and Dr. John. The highlight of the album is Lyle Lovett doing the best version of "Friend Of The Devil" ever recorded. Whether you're a Deadhead or not, the music on the CD will turn you into a fan.

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2. http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B000002VHS/aboutthisparticu

Parting Pointer

The Parting Pointer is ATPM's "Tips and Tricks" section. If you have a pointer that you would like to share with other readers to make their Mac experience easier or more enjoyable, please send it to me at egoss@atpm.com. This month's "Parting Pointer":

How to Achieve the Best Sounding Audio CDs

To ensure your recorded audio CDs sound their best, record only at 2X speed regardless of your burner's top speed rating. It is generally agreed that 2X speed produces the best sounding audio CDs with the fewest problems. Happy listening!